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HISTORY AND REPOSITORY

OF

PULPIT ELOQUENCE,

(DECEASED DIVINES,)

CONTAINING

THE MASTERPIECES

OF

BOSSUET, BOURDALOUE, MASSILLON, FLECHIER, ABBADIE, TAYLOR, BARROW,
HALL, WATSON, M'LAURIN, CHALMERS, EVANS, EDWARDS, DAVIES,
JOHN M. MASON, ETC., ETC.,

WITH DISCOURSES

FROM

CHRYSOSTOM, BASIL, GREGORY NAZIANZEN, AUGUSTINE, ATHANASIUS, AND OTHERS
AMONG THE "FATHERS," AND FROM WICKLIFFE, LUTHER, CALVIN, MELANCTHON,
KNOX, LATIMER, ETC., OF THE "REFORMERS."

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SCOTTISH, AMERICAN, AND WELSH CHURCHES; A LARGE NUMBER OF WHICH HAVE NOW, FOR
THE FIRST TIME, BEEN TRANSLATED. THE WHOLE ARRANGED IN THEIR
PROPER ORDER, AND ACCOMPANIED WITH

HISTORICAL SKETCHES OF PREACHING

IN THE DIFFERENT COUNTRIES REPRESENTED, AND

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL NOTICES

OF THE SEVERAL PREACHERS AND THEIR DISCOURSES.

BY

REV. HENRY C. FISH,

AUTHOR OF PREMIUM ESSAY, "PRIMITIVE PIETY REVIVED."

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Sketch of the French Pulpit.

THE FRENCH PULPIT.

In the fifth century, Clovis I., a Pagan King of France, fell in love with Clotilda, a Christian princess of the house of Burgundy, who agreed to marry him only on condition of his becoming a Christian, to which he consented, A.D. 491. The king, however, delayed the performance of this condition till five years after his marriage, when, being engaged in a desperate battle, and having reason to fear the total defeat of his army, he lifted up his eyes unto heaven, and put up this prayer, "*God of Queen Clotilda! grant me the victory, and I vow to be baptized, and thenceforth to worship no other God but Thee!*" He obtained the victory, and at his return was baptized, at Rheims, December 25th, 496. His sister, and more than three thousand of his subjects followed his example, and Christianity became the professed religion of France.*

Previous to this, and probably by some of the Apostles themselves, had Christianity been introduced into France. Eminent men had preached the pure doctrine, and sealed it with their blood; and many Christian societies had been formed. That now introduced, was *only* a "*professed*" religion. Neither the king nor the subjects were cleansed by the baptismal waters. Their morals were still corrupt; and while Christianity gained numbers, and wealth, and pomp, and worldly influence, by union with the State, she lost her purity, and simplicity, and power. "A virgin before, she became a prostitute now." The nominal religion, henceforth, was scarcely better than the very paganism which it had supplanted, and the pulpit had no more power to reform society than had been possessed by the altars and images of the idolatrous heathen. Prevailing corruption ensued, and the evil waxed worse and worse, until, at the Reformation, where sin had abounded, grace did much more abound.

It is true that the defection was not complete. In the obscure fastnesses of some of the mountain districts of France, pious souls, in an unwritten but bright succession, from the earliest periods downward to the time of the Reformation, had trimmed the flickering lamp of evangelical truth. Unknown by the world, and unnoticed by the great, there were doubtless many strong and noble-minded preachers, who, like Peter Waldo, of the twelfth century, contended earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. These, however, were but dim and distant lights in the surrounding darkness. The chief ministers of religion had become temporal princes, and the high-priest had his court, his council, his embassadors, and his army. The common clergy had acquired wealth, and, neglecting their proper duties, were occupied with their pleasures and their estates. Preaching had degenerated into vulgar ribaldry, coarse buffoonery, and ignorant or willful wresting of the Scriptures, to favor selfish designs: and the divinity of the schools was made up of idle distinctions, and senseless axioms, and the rules of casuistry and low morality.

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* Robinson's Memoirs of the Reformation in France.

Such was the condition of the ministry, and such the character of the preaching, when the leaven of the Reformation, which had been diffused from Germany to Geneva, began to spread in France, about the year 1520. A few years after this Calvin made his appearance on the stage, persecution reared its demon-head, and the Reformed Church of France had the honor of wearing the crown of martyrdom. Leclerc, the first leader of the Church at Meaux, and the first French martyr, was arrested and cruelly whipped, then branded with a red-hot iron on the forehead, then banished the town, and finally executed in 1524. The peal of the great bell of Nôtre Dame, at Paris, announced the burning alive of two other ministers, the year following; and thus the work of persecution went on. But the work of the Lord Jesus advanced also; giving to the words of old Chrysostom a most brilliant illustration: "O man, there is nothing mightier than the Church. The waves do not dash in pieces the rocks, but they themselves dissolve into foam. Cease the strife, lest it make thine own strength to cease. Wage not war against heaven. Vie not with God. Heaven exists for the sake of the Church."

The fortunes of the French pulpit, from this time onward to the modern period, it is not necessary minutely to trace, as they were, in many respects, common with those of the German pulpit, which are elsewhere given somewhat in detail. The salient points in its history can only be noticed. The leading events affecting it, which occurred in the sixteenth century, were the royal smiles of the pious Queen of Navarre, who made her court a covert from the storm, "and supplied France with preachers, and the exiles of Geneva with money;" its violent shocks from the cruelty of Henry II., who succeeded Francis his father, in 1547; and from the religious wars in the last half of the century, in which the Prince of Condé and the King of Navarre were leaders upon one side, and the Guises upon the other; the horrible slaughter of the Huguenots on St. Bartholomew's day, August, 1572, in which five thousand people in Paris alone were massacred, and in the provinces around, not less than twenty-five thousand, many of whom were pious and excellent Protestant preachers. The Edict of Nantes, in 1598, happily concluded these barbarities, but as they were progressing, the French pulpit had presented a most deplorable aspect. It was filled with political preachers, whose hearts were burning with hate toward the Protestants, and whose tongues were drawn swords. France was absolutely at the mercy of these preachers. The pulpit was superior to the throne, and its angry occupants, whose continual cry was, "Rob! rob! slay! slay!" urged on the king, who, if he had the disposition, had not the fortitude to withstand their clamor.

The seventeenth century opened auspiciously for the interests of Protestantism in France. The Edicts of Nantes, which was declared *perpetual* and *irrevocable*, among its ninety-two articles, contained provisions securing free toleration to the Protestants. The churches, by consequence, flourished; the universities were adorned with learned and pious professors, such as Casaubon, Daille, and others; and the number of good pastors and able preachers, was being rapidly augmented. The death of King Henry, by the hand of the deluded Ravaillac, was a severe blow upon the rising faith; the succession of Louis XIII. in 1610, who proved to be the mere tool of his flatterers, and his recall of the Jesuits from their banishment, were events more threatening still; and the disaster was consummated by the domination over the Reformed Churches of the infamous Richelieu, whom the king had made prime minister for publishing a scandalous libel against the Protestants. The attempts of Richelieu to crush the adherents of the Reformed doctrines, reduced the French Protestant pulpit to a state of impotency, which only needed the series of cruelties in the succeeding reign, to render it well-nigh complete.

About the year 1670 the bloody hand of persecution began its fearful work, in good earnest, for the extermination of the faithful. The sacking of Montauban, the prohibition of the Protestant clergy from exercising discipline over their churches or publishing books, and finally, from preaching at all—these acts were the prelude of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, which prepared the way for the grand *finale* of the bloody scene—the rack, the dungeon, the scaffold, the fetters, the sword, the red-hot pincers, the scalding lead, the half-roasted victims, the cut, the slashed, the wounded, the pierced, the bruised, the stretched, the hanged, the massacred, and the fleeing from the kingdom of eight hundred thousand individuals, whose consciences forbade connection with the Romish hierarchy. So much for the revocation of an "*irrevocable*" treaty. So much for Jesuitical policy, and the so-called *religion* of the Roman Catholic *Church*, whose "Supreme Head," in a letter to King Louis, thanked him for his *zeal* and PIETY *in extirpating heresy;* and ordered a *Te Deum* to be sung, in token of grateful praise.

Thus closed the seventeenth century. During the eighteenth, the line of *Protestant* preaching can not be traced. Teachers of the true faith, there were, for four hundred thousand Protestants remained, notwithstanding the efforts for their entire extermination; and they continued to assemble, in spite of threats and punishment, and like those of old, sing Psalms to Christ as unto God. But they had no *pastors*, and the occasional visits of men of apostolic zeal, who periled their lives to break the bread of life to the destitute, furnished most of the Protestant preaching which they heard. Romanism was in its glory. It was triumphant. It was never before so much respected, and never will be again.

The reign of the "GRAND MONARCH," Louis XIV., which covered the last half of the previous century, covers well-nigh the first quarter of this. It was the Augustan age of France. In military glory, in literary genius, in valuable discoveries, and the fine arts, no other period can boast of equal brilliancy: for it was the age of Condé and Turenne, of Corneille and Moliere and Racine, of Pascal and La Fontaine and Montesquieu, of Malebranche and Boileau and Fontenelle, of Bourdaloue and Bossuet and Fénélon and Flechier and La Rue, and others, scarcely less distinguished. It was the age, also, of the highest kind of eloquence; not of the bar, or the popular assembly, but of the *pulpit.* Considered as the *product of literary art*, merely, the sermon never attained to such perfection as during the time of which we speak. Pulpit eloquence never won such brilliant achievements. The French sermon of this period was as distinctly marked in the matter of rhetorical finish, as was the Greek drama in the days of its glory. The pulpit was the grand point of attraction. Around it gathered rank, and fashion, and royalty, and the greatest scholars, and critics, and artists, all equally thrilled, and astonished, and delighted. This wonderful improvement in pulpit oratory, by which it was raised from the florid, trashy, affected kind, to its greatest height of rhetorical perfection, is attributable, mainly to Bourdaloue. To him properly belongs the glory of reforming the French pulpit. He was speedily followed by Bossuet, and others, in the improved mode of preaching, and for half a century the French Catholic preachers challenge the admiration of all ages.

But the splendid age of Louis XIV. ended in exhaustion and gloom. The heart of the nation was not sound. How could it have been, in the fearful absence of Gospel truth? for, with some exceptions, the preaching of the times, though brilliant, was illy adapted to reform men by leading to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Without, there was beauty; within, there was corruption and decay. The Church and State declined together. All the glories of the seventeenth and the earlier part of the eighteenth centuries, passed away, to be succeeded by weakness and disorder. A spirit of skepticism had been engendered by the tyranny of the king, and the immorality and hypocrisy of the court. The awful barbarities to which innocent Christians had been subjected, at the instigation of the "HOLY CATHOLIC, THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH," acting in the name of Jesus Christ, had awakened disgust at the very *name* of religion, and prepared a most receptive soil for the seeds of German infidelity, which, about this time, were scattered in France. In vain were the efforts of the pious Jansenists who sought to restore the doctrines of grace; in vain the teaching of Quietism, with Madame Guyon as its leading spirit, aiming to introduce into the Catholic communion a spiritual religion. The downward tendency was too strong, and the whole nation plunged into the horrible abyss of irreligion and blood, in the Revolution of 1789.

We must not look for pulpit eloquence in France subsequent to the close of the eighteenth century. Indeed its glory departed with the death of the immortal triumvirate, Bossuet, Bourdaloue, Massillon. The great Catholic preachers had no successors. And how was it possible for learning and eloquence to flourish in the ranks of the Protestants, when their history is but a series of sufferings, from disasters and cruel oppression? It was not till the famous edict of Louis XVI., in 1787, that their liberties were legally restored; and even then, they were ill-treated in the exercise of their religious rights. The National Assembly in 1789, decreed that "no one be troubled for his opinions, even of a religious kind, provided that their publication do not disturb the public order established by law;" but yet nothing was effectually done to guarantee full liberty of worship.

During the reign of the sanguinary Robespierre, well termed the *Reign of Terror*, every form of religion was equally suppressed; and Infidelity had every thing its own way. The simple worship of God in the Spirit, was confounded with the senseless worship of the Virgin Mary and Canonized Saints, and the public worship of both was suppressed, until the partial relief afforded by the act of toleration in the third year of the Republic. Nobly did Napoleon Bonaparte, in the year 1804, maintain the rights of conscience, in his reply to M. Martin, President of the Consistory of Geneva, in words worthy to be had in everlasting remembrance: "*I wish it to be understood that my intention and my firm determination are to maintain liberty of worship.* THE EMPIRE OF THE LAW ENDS WHERE THE EMPIRE OF THE CONSCIENCE BEGINS. *Neither the law nor the prince must infringe upon this empire.*" And by his several decrees in favor of Protestants, and the restoring to them of their college at Montauban, suppressed at the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, did he evince the sincerity of his declaration. But eleven years from the time of uttering those words Napoleon was finally banished to St. Helena; the House of the Bourbons was restored, and that very year saw the inhuman murder of about four hundred Protestants at Nîmes, and the flight of ten thousand others to the mountains of Cevennes. We need not trace the history futher. Let it suffice to say that at that time (1815), the number of Protestant ministers in France was only about two hundred and fifty.

But though enveloped in flames, the bush has not been consumed. Of late, there has been a revival of popery in France: but there has been a greater revival of the primitive faith. The two great divisions in the Protestant ranks, are the Lutheran and the Reformed Churches. The former bear the German type in doctrine, and have about two hundred and fifty ministers. The latter, with a ministry of some six hundred, are the descendants of the old Huguenots. The clergy of both these churches, as well as those of the Roman Catholic order, receive their support from the National budget. The Confederated Dissenting Churches of the Evangelical Union, an association similar to the Free Church of Scotland, refusing to receive state support, embrace some twenty-five or thirty preachers; and there are about the same number in the Unconfederated or Independent Churches. The number of preachers in the French Methodist Church, is also about the same. Besides these there are others in less extensive connections. The *doctrinal belief* of the present Protestant ministers of France, varies widely; from that of the Liberals, on the extreme of Rationalism (the bane of French Protestantism), to the Evangelicals, at the other extreme of Biblicism. On one point, at least, they all agree; the importance of rescuing the people from the power of the Romish priesthood, to which they are profoundly hostile. It is supposed that there are about seven hundred ministers, at this time, in France, who are essentially evangelical in doctrine, many of whom are burning and shining lights.

M. de Vericour, in his work on French literature, remarks that "the *eloquence* of the pulpit in France is completely null." The remark is true in the main, but should certainly be qualified in favor of some few preachers of acknowledged attainments in pulpit oratory, both in the Protestant and Roman Catholic connections. The general character of the French school of preaching resembles that of the German, and is quite unlike that of the English. The English preachers disdain the arts of oratory, the French revel in animated diction, and graceful gesture. The former are solid, the latter ornamental. The former delve in theological lore, and feed the understanding; the latter elaborate eloquent paragraphs, to rouse up the sensibilities, and kindle into a blaze the feelings. The former have more of light, the latter more of heat. Both have their faults. If the former are instructive, they are also too dull and heavy. If the latter are animating and soul-stirring, they are sometimes too showy and bombastic. If the former are wise in having an eye to the intellect, and the substance, they are unwise in losing sight of the heart and the manner. If the latter delight the imagination, and play skillfully upon the strings of the passions, it were wisdom, also, to unfold great principles, and lay a broad and deep foundation for a substantial and vigorous Christian life.

Hence both the English and the French schools of pulpit eloquence should be studied. Some of the *dryness* of even the American pulpit could well be dispensed with, for more of the *onction* of the French. It is equally unwise either to copy, or to ignore, the one or the other. Let the excellences of both be sought after. Perhaps the present tendency is to forget that men have sentiments and feelings; that there are secret springs in the soul which an enchanting oratory may wisely take advantage of, in impressing Scripture truth. Should a sermon bear the marks of the file and the cold-chisel only? Would it not be well that it gave evidence of having been "fabricated in fire," by coming forth all "glowing and sparkling from the living furnace within?" And one means of acquiring this is an increased familiarity with the German and French style of preaching.

The peculiarities of this school are quite fully presented by a competent hand,* in the following delineation of the leading characteristics of the evangelical French preachers, with which we conclude our sketch:

"Their sermons are almost always of a very moderate length. It is seldom that they exceed forty-five minutes. We never heard one—and we have heard many—which exceeded an hour. Their prayers, too, are uniformly short, very simple, and direct. And here we may say that the order of the service in the Reformed French churches (and the same order prevails in the churches of the Augsburg Confession, or Lutheran denomination), is as follows. 1. The invocation of the blessing of God on the service. 2. The reading of the Ten Commandments. 3. The Confession, a beautiful prayer, which is read in all their churches. It is taken from their Liturgy. It is, as its title indicates, a confession of sin. It is short, simple, and, we think, superior to the Confession in the Liturgy of the Episcopal service, beautiful as that is. 4. The singing of a hymn. 5. The reading of a portion of the Scriptures. 6. An extemporary prayer. 7. The sermon. 8. A hymn. 9. A prayer—usually taken from the Liturgy, and embraces petitions for the king and queen, the other members of the royal family, and the officers and members of the government in general. 10. The benediction; which is followed by a word of exhortation to the people to remember the *poor*, as they retire. This leads to a collection for their benefit, which is made by depositing, by all who choose to give any thing, their contributions in boxes at the doors of the church.

"This is a brief view of the order of the services which is usually followed in the Protestant churches and chapels in France. We have often been struck with the just symmetry which prevails in all their public services. Prayers, hymns, and sermons are almost always of about the proper length. And the whole order of exercises is gone through with so much promptitude and vivacity that there is seldom room for *ennui*.

"A second characteristic of evangelical French preaching is *simplicity of style*. The sermons of the greater part, by far, of the evangelical ministers of France are distinguished by a freedom of useless repetitions, and from any thing approaching to what may be called grandiloquence. This is far from being the case with French writers in other departments of literature. On the contrary, it is a fault which is exceedingly common among them, to indulge in pompous and airy descriptions, in conceits and in *bon mots*, which render the style obscure and destroy its simplicity. But though this fault is of frequent occurrence among writers of France, it can not be charged upon the evangelical preaching of that country. On the contrary, their sermons are clothed in a singular and beautiful simplicity of style. Nothing superfluous, nothing forced or unnatural appears in them.

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* Rev. Dr. Baird, in Bib. Repos. 1839.

"A third characteristic of evangelical preaching is what may be called *directness of style.* By this we mean that the sentiment or idea which the speaker or writer wishes to express, is set forth in as few words as possible. The *best* French writers have very much of this quality of style, and express their meaning with almost epigrammatic brevity. There is great beauty in this, if it be not carried too far. Nothing suits the French nature better than to express an idea with such brevity and concentrated force, that it may strike upon the mind with the unexpected suddenness and force of a flash of lightning. There is a good deal of this directness in the style of the best French preachers, though it is not usually, in their case, carried so far as to have the appearance of being the result of a studied effort, as it so often and so obviously is, in the case of many other writers.

"The fourth characteristic of evangelical French preaching is what the French call *onction.* It is not very easy to give the reader a definite idea of the meaning of the word *onction*, when thus employed. As the word in its original sense denotes "ointment," and the "act of anointing," it would seem difficult to trace any analogy between its meaning, and any conceivable character of eloquence, unless it be that of *smoothness*, which is far from being the idea which the French attach to the word *onction*, as applied to speaking or preaching. By *onction* they seem to mean that characteristic of preaching which consists very much in a solemn and yet persuasive tone of voice, united with a sort of holy and rather formal gesturing, which, while it excites an attention nearly allied to awe, soothes and leads the mind to devotion. They invariably include, however, the idea that the preaching is *powerful* and full of *feeling.* And perhaps this is the prominent idea which they now attach to the word, not excluding that of a holy solemnity in matter and manner, which is well fitted to lead to serious emotions.

"Taking the word *onction* in the sense which we have just attempted to give to it, we think that the French preachers have more of what it imports than any other preachers whom we have ever heard. This remark is applicable to the unevangelical as well as evangelical ministers. In some cases they have a manner of utterance so studied and slow, especially at the commencement of the services of the pulpit, that it is drawling, and in fact disagreeable. The preachers who fall into this fault, almost invariably have a formal, and in some degree, affected manner of gesture, such as slowly elevating the hands, and stretching them out to the utmost extent and keeping them long in that position, in prayer, and frequently giving to their fingers, and even the whole hand, a vibratory motion, which resembles trembling, at the moment when they pronounce some important word in a slow tone and with such an abundance of the circumflex accent, as to produce a thrilling impression on the hearer. But a greater part of them have a good degree of simplicity in their manner of speaking, and do not offend against correct taste, by that studied solemnity which has just been described.

"It may be said that *pathos*, or the exhibition of deep emotion, characterizes French preaching to a greater degree than it does English or American preaching. Few French preachers fail to excite more or less of emotion in the minds of their hearers, in almost every discourse which they deliver. By the use of touching expressions, pronounced in tones of voice fitted to excite feeling, and united with an appearance of countenance, and a manner of gesture which indicate emotion on the part of the speaker, they seldom fail of kindling in the bosoms of their excitable auditors, the sentiments and emotions which the nature of the subject is calculated to produce. We have known French preachers who are far from being evangelical in their doctrines, who possess so much of *pathos* in their delivery, who manifest so much emotion themselves, and who adopt a manner of speaking of Christ which so nearly approaches that which is evangelical, that they make the impression on every stranger who is imperfectly acquainted with their character, and with the French language, that they are persons of eminent piety and zeal! And all this is merely an effect of their manner of speaking. The evangelical ministers of France, so far as we have heard them, seem to have attained great propriety in their speaking, having enough of *onction* and *pathos*, and at the same time that beautiful simplicity of manner, which accompanies unaffected sincerity.

"The French preachers of the present day, preserve the manner of composing their sermons which the preachers of the olden times in France followed. Like them, they almost invariably, after pronouncing a suitable introduction, pause, and utter a short prayer for the blessing of God on the discussion of the subject which is to be presented in the following portion of the discourse. To one who is not accustomed to it, this appears remarkable, but it soon becomes a very agreeable interruption to the current of the sermon. It requires some tact to make it in such a variety of ways, as not to prove monotonous and formal. We will add that the majority of French ministers write their sermons with care, and very many of them commit them to memory, and speak either with, or without their notes before them.

"The last characteristic of evangelical French preaching which we would speak of, is that which may be termed *Biblical*. The French preachers of this school possess this important quality of good preaching to a very high degree. They aim at giving simply the mind of the Spirit. 'Thus saith the Lord,' is the burden of their discourses. They are not given to the vain speculation of a 'philosophy falsely so called.' On the contrary their sermons are generally distinguished for simple and common sense expositions of the doctrines of the sacred Scriptures. The discussions which they contain, are fine specimens of sound reasoning. It is rare to find them venturing upon subjects respecting which Revelation is silent, or such as manifestly transcend the powers of the human mind. In this respect they differ widely from their neighbors on the other side of the Rhine. While it is next to an impossibility to find a German, even among those who are evangelical on all the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, who is fully brought to give up the attempt to interpret the Scriptures by his philosophy, the Frenchman who has 'put on Christ,' is distinguished for the docility with which he submits his mind and will to what God has revealed. And this is the glory of the Evangelical Protestant Church of France, and has been ever since the days of the Reformation."

DISCOURSE FORTY-FIFTH.

JOHN CALVIN.

Calvin was born at Noyon, in Picardy, the 10th of July, 1509, the same year that Henry VIII. was crowned King of England, and one year after Luther, then twenty-five years of age, was established preacher and professor at Wittenburg. His family name was Cauvin, which he Latinized into Calvinus. When a mere child he used to pray in the open air; and evinced a remarkable sense of the presence of God. He studied at the College de la Marché, at Paris, and at that of Montaign. At twenty years of age he became preacher at Noyon. Subsequently he turned his attention to the law, in which he became proficient. He, however, resumed his studies in theology; and was turned away from the Catholic faith by his own investigations, and the cruel persecutions visited upon those who adopted the views of the Lutheran Reformation. He soon went to Italy, where he preached the new doctrine, but in 1536 was compelled to leave the scene of his labors, when he settled at Geneva and commenced the work of a Reformed Christian minister. Banished thence, he found a shelter from the storm at Strasburg, where he became professor and pastor. In 1541 he returned to Geneva and energetically recommenced the work of the Reformation. Much of the time he preached daily, lectured frequently in theology, presided at meetings, instructed the churches, defended the Protestants by his writings, and by visiting them from place to place, encouraged and confirmed their faith. He wrote, also, many elaborate works, and performed otherwise an amount of labor almost incredible. His health early began to decline, and at the age of fifty-four he rested from his labors, and went up to the reward of grace in heaven.

The moral and intellectual endowments of Calvin marked him out for a man called and qualified to guide the opinions, and control the emotions of men in the trying times of the Reformation. And few have done more to shape the theological opinions of men for all time.

The cautious Scaliger pronounces him the most exalted character that has appeared since the days of the Apostles, and at the age of twenty-two the most learned man in Europe. His works first appeared in 1578, in twelve folio volumes. Most of them have recently been issued by the Calvin Translation Society of Edinburg, in some fifty vols. 8vo.

As a preacher, Calvin is by no means to be ranked with the pulpit orators of the 17th century. He knew nothing of the rhetorical *art* of which they made themselves masters; nor had the French language yet attained the flexibility and polish which it exhibited a century later. Simplicity is the prominent characteristic of his sermons. His style was like his character—plain, unartificial, transparent, and practical; verifying the remark of his biographer, that "the greater genius is always the more simple." Calvin preached extempore; but as his utterance was not rapid, the amanuenses reported him so exactly as to lead him to say of some of his sermons, "they were printed just as they fell from my lips."

The sermon here given is an authentic specimen of Calvin's pulpit ministrations. It is one of four which he himself published at Geneva in 1552. It was entitled "On Bearing Persecution," and he put it forth as he says, "to exhort all believers to prize the honor and service of God more than their own life, and to strengthen them against all temptations." A few of the less important sentences are omitted for the sake of brevity. With this exception it is as fair a representation of the original discourse, as can be made in the necessary translation.

BEARING THE REPROACH OF CHRIST.

"Let us go forth out of the tents after Christ, bearing His reproach."—Heb. xiii. 13.

As persecution is always harsh and bitter, let us consider HOW AND BY WHAT MEANS CHRISTIANS MAY BE ABLE TO FORTIFY THEMSELVES WITH PATIENCE, SO AS UNFLINCHINGLY TO EXPOSE THEIR LIFE FOR THE TRUTH OF GOD. The text which we have read out, when it is properly understood, is sufficient to induce us to do so. The Apostle says, "Let us go forth from the city after the Lord Jesus, bearing His reproach." In the first place, he reminds us, although the sword should not be drawn over us nor the fires kindled to burn us, that we can not be truly united to the Son of God while we are rooted in this world. Wherefore, a Christian, even in repose, must always have one foot lifted to march to battle, and not only so, but he must have his affections withdrawn from the world, although his body is dwelling in it. Grant that this at first sight seems to us hard, still we must be satisfied with the words of St. Paul, "We are called and appointed to suffer." As if he had said such is our condition as Christians; this is the road by which we must go, if we would follow Christ.

Meanwhile, to solace our infirmity and mitigate the vexation and sorrow which persecution might cause us, a good reward is held forth. In suffering for the cause of God, we are walking step by step after the Son of God, and have Him for our guide. Were it simply said that to be Christians we must pass through all the insults of the world boldly, to meet death at all times and in whatever way God may be pleased to appoint; we might apparently have some pretext for replying, It is a strange road to go at a peradventure. But when we are commanded to follow the Lord Jesus, His guidance is too good and honorable to be refused.

Now, in order that we may be more deeply moved, not only is it said that Jesus Christ walketh before us as our Captain, but that we are made conformable to His image; as St. Paul speaks in the eighth chapter to the Romans, "God hath ordained all those whom He hath adopted for His children, to be made conformable to Him who is the pattern and head of all."

Are we so delicate as to be unwilling to endure any thing? Then we must renounce the grace of God by which He has called us to the hope of salvation. For there are two things which can not be separated—to be members of Christ, and to be tried by many afflictions. We certainly ought to prize such a conformity to the Son of God much more than we do. It is true that in the world's judgment there is disgrace in suffering for the Gospel. But since we know that unbelievers are blind, ought we not to have better eyes than they? It is ignominy to suffer from those who occupy the seat of justice, but St. Paul shows us by his example that we have to glory in scourgings for Jesus Christ, as marks by which God recognizes and avows us for His own. And we know what St. Luke narrates of Peter and John, namely, that they rejoiced to have been "counted worthy to suffer infamy and reproach for the name of the Lord Jesus."

Ignominy and dignity are two opposites; so says the world, which, being infatuated, judges against all reason, and in this way converts the glory of God into dishonor. But, on our part, let us not refuse to be vilified as concerns the world, in order to be honored before God and His angels. We see what pains the ambitious take to receive the commands of a king, and what a boast they make of it. The Son of God presents His commands to us, and every one stands back! Tell me, pray, whether in so doing we are worthy of having any thing in common with Him? There is nothing here to attract our sensual nature, but such notwithstanding are the true escutcheons of nobility in the heavens. Imprisonment, exile, evil report, imply in men's imaginations whatever is to be vituperated;

but what hinders us from viewing things as God judges and declares them, save our unbelief? Wherefore, let the name of the Son of God have all the weight with us which it deserves, that we may learn to count it honor when He stamps His mark upon us. If we act otherwise, our ingratitude is insupportable! Were God to deal with us according to our deserts, would He not have just cause to chastise us daily in a thousand ways? Nay more, a hundred thousand deaths would not suffice for a small portion of our misdeeds! Now, if in His infinite goodness, He puts all our faults under His foot, and abolishes them, and instead of punishing us according to our demerit, devises an admirable means to convert our afflictions into honor and a special privilege, inasmuch as through them we are taken into partnership with His Son, must it not be said, when we disdain such a happy state, that we have indeed made little progress in Christian doctrine?

Accordingly St. Peter, after exhorting us to walk so purely in the fear of God, as "not to suffer as thieves, adulterers, and murderers," immediately adds, "If we must suffer as Christians, let us glorify God for the blessings which He thus bestows upon us." It is not without cause he speaks thus. For who are we, I pray, to be witnesses of the truth of God, and advocates to maintain His cause? Here we are, poor worms of the earth, creatures full of vanity, full of lies, and yet God employs us to defend His truth—an honor which pertains not even to the angels of heaven! May not this consideration alone well inflame us to offer ourselves to God to be employed in any way in such honorable service?

Many persons, however, can not refrain from pleading against God; or, at least, from complaining against Him for not better supporting their weakness. It is marvelously strange, they say, how God, after having chosen us for His children, allows us to be so trampled upon and tormented by the ungodly. I answer, even were it not apparent why He does so, He well might exercise His authority over us, and fix our lot at His pleasure. But when we see that Jesus Christ is our pattern, ought we not, without inquiring further, to esteem it great happiness that we are made like Him? God, however, makes it very apparent what the reasons are for which He is pleased that we should be persecuted. Had we nothing more than the consideration suggested by St. Peter, (1 Pet. i. 7.) we were disdainful indeed not to acquiesce in it. He says, 'Since gold and silver, which are only corruptible metals, are purified and tested by fire, it is but reasonable that our faith, which surpasses all the riches of the world, should be tried.' It were easy, indeed, for God to crown us at once without requiring us to sustain any combats; but as it is His pleasure that until the end of the world Christ shall reign in the midst of His enemies, so it is also His pleasure that we, being placed in the midst of them, shall suffer their oppression and violence till He deliver us. I know, indeed, that the flesh kicks when it is to be brought to this point, but still the will of God must have the mastery. If we feel some repugnance in ourselves, it need not surprise us; for it is only too natural for us to shun the cross. Still let us not fail to surmount it, knowing that God accepts our obedience, provided we bring all our feelings and wishes into captivity, and make them subject to Him.

When the Prophets and Apostles went to death, it was not without feeling within some inclination to recoil. "They will lead thee whither thou wouldst not," said our Lord Jesus Christ to Peter. When such fears of death arise within us, let us gain the mastery over them, or rather let God gain it; and, meanwhile, let us feel assured that we offer Him a pleasing sacrifice when we resist and do violence to our inclinations for the purpose of placing ourselves entirely under His command. This is the principal war in which God would have His children to be engaged. He would have them strive to suppress every rebellious thought and feeling which would turn them aside from the path to which He points. And the consolations are so ample that it may well be said, we are more than cowards if we give way!

In ancient times vast numbers of people, to obtain a simple crown of leaves, refused no toil, no pain, no trouble; nay, it even cost them nothing to die, and yet every one of them fought for a peradventure, not knowing whether he was to gain or lose the prize. God holds forth to us the immortal crown by which we may become partakers of His glory. He does not mean to fight at hap-hazard, but all of us have a promise of the prize for which we strive. Have we any cause then to decline the struggle? Do we think it has been said in vain, "If we die with Jesus Christ we shall also live with Him?" Our triumph is prepared and yet we do all we can to shun the combat!

But it is said that "all we teach on this subject is repugnant to human judgment." I confess it. And hence when our Saviour declares, "Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake," He gives utterance to a sentiment which is not easily received in the world. On the contrary, He wishes to account that as happiness, which in the judgment of sense is misery. We seem to ourselves miserable when God leaves us to be trampled upon by the tyranny and cruelty of our enemies; but the error is that we look not to the promises of God, which assure us that all will turn to our good. We are cast down when we see the wicked stronger than we, and planting their foot on our throat; "But such confusion should rather," as St. Paul says, "cause us to lift up our heads." Seeing we are too much disposed to amuse ourselves with present objects, God, in permitting the good to be maltreated and the wicked to have sway, shows by evident tokens that a day is coming on which all that is now in confusion will be reduced to order. If the period seems distant, let us run to the remedy, and not flatter ourselves in our sin; for it is certain that we have no faith if we can not carry our views forward to the coming of Jesus Christ.

To leave no means which may be fitted to stimulate us unemployed, God sets before us PROMISES on the one hand, and THREATENINGS on the other. Do we feel that the promises have not sufficient influence, let us strengthen them by adding the threatenings. It is true we must be perverse in the extreme not to put more faith in the promises of God, when the Lord Jesus says that He will own us as His before His Father, provided we confess Him before men. What should prevent us from making the confession which He requires? Let men do their utmost, they can not do worse than murder us; and will not the heavenly life compensate for this? I do not here collect all the passages of Scripture which bear upon this subject; they are so often reiterated that we ought to be perfectly satisfied with them. When the struggle comes, if three or four passages do not suffice, a hundred surely ought to make us proof against all temptations!

But if God can not win us to Himself by gentle means, must we not be mere blocks if His threatenings also fail? Jesus Christ summons all those who from fear of temporal death shall have denied the truth, to appear at the bar of God His Father, and says, "That then both soul and body will be consigned to perdition." And in another passage He says, "That He will disclaim all those who shall have denied Him before men." These words, if we are not altogether impervious to feeling, might well make our hair stand on end! Be this as it may, this much is certain—if these things do not move us as they ought, nothing remains for us but a fearful judgment. All the words of Christ having proved unavailing, we stand convicted of gross infidelity.

It is vain for us to allege that pity should be shown us, inasmuch as our nature is so frail; for it is said, on the contrary, that Moses having looked to God by faith was fortified so as not to yield under any temptation. Wherefore, when we are thus soft and easy to bend, it is a manifest sign—I do not say that we have no zeal, no firmness—but that we know nothing either of God or His kingdom. When we are reminded that we ought to be united to our Head, it seems for us a fine pretext for corruption to say, that we are men! But what were those who have trodden the path before us? Indeed, had we nothing more than pure doctrine, all the excuses we could make would be frivolous; but having so many examples, which ought to supply us with the strongest proof, the more deserving are we of condemnation.

There are two points to be considered. The first is, that the whole body of the Church has always been, and to the end will be, liable to be afflicted by the wicked, as is said in Psalm, cxxix. 1: "From my youth up they have tormented me, and dragged the plow over me from one end to the other." The Holy Spirit there brings in the ancient Church, in order that we, having been much acquainted with her afflictions, may not regard it either as new or vexatious, when the like is done to ourselves in the present day. St. Paul, also, in quoting from another Psalm, a passage in which it is said, "We have been like sheep to the slaughter;" shows that that has not been for one age only, but is the ordinary condition of the Church, and shall be.

Therefore, in seeing how the Church of God is trampled upon in the present day by proud worldlings, how one barks, and another bites; how they torture, how they plot against her; how she is assailed incessantly by mad dogs, and savage beasts, let it remind us that the same thing was done in all the olden time. It is true God sometimes gives her a time of refreshment and a truce, hence, in the Psalm above quoted, it is said, 'He cutteth the cords of the wicked;' and in another passage, 'He breaks their staff, lest the good should fall away, by being too hardly pressed.' But still it has pleased Him that His Church should always have to battle so long as she is in this world, her repose being treasured upon high in the heavens.

Meanwhile, the issue of her afflictions has always been fortunate. At all events God has caused that though she has been pressed by many calamities, she has never been completely crushed; as it is said, 'The wicked, with all their efforts have not succeeded in that at which they aimed.' St. Paul glories in the fact, and shows that this is the course which God in mercy always takes, "We endure tribulations, but we are not in agony; we are impoverished, but not left destitute; we are persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but we perish not; bearing every where in our bodies the mortification of the Lord Jesus, in order that His life may be manifested in our mortal bodies." Such being, as we see, the issue which God has at all times given to the persecutions of His Church, we ought to take courage, knowing that our forefathers, who were frail men like ourselves, always had the victory over their enemies, by remaining firm in endurance.

I only touch on this article briefly, to come to the *second*, which is more to our purpose, viz.: that WE OUGHT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE PARTICULAR MARTYRS WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE US.

These are not confined to two or three, but are, as the Apostle says, "a great and dense cloud." By this expression he intimates that the number is so great that it ought, as it were, completely to engross our sight. Not to be tedious, I will only mention the Jews, who were persecuted for the true religion, as well under the tyranny of King Antiochus as a little after his death. We can not allege that the number of sufferers was small, for it formed, as it were, a large army of martyrs. We can not say that it consisted of prophets, whom God had set apart from the common people; for women and young children formed part of the band. We can not say that they got off at a cheap rate, for they were tortured as cruelly as it was possible to be. Accordingly, we hear what the Apostle says: "Some were stretched out like drums, not caring to be delivered, that they might obtain a better resurrection; others were proved by mockery and blows, or bonds and prisons; others were stoned or sawn asunder; others traveled up and down, wandering among mountains and caves.'

Let us now compare their case with ours. If they so endured for the truth, which was at that time so obscure, what ought we to do in the clear light which is now shining? God speaks to us with open voice; the great gate of the kingdom of heaven has been opened, and Jesus Christ calls us to Himself, after having come down to us, that we might have Him, as it were, present to our eyes. What a reproach would it be to us to have less zeal in suffering for the Gospel, than those had who only hailed the promises afar off, who had only a little wicket opened, whereby to come to the kingdom of God, and who had only some memorial and type of Christ! These things can not be expressed in word as they deserve, and therefore I leave each to ponder them for himself.

Let it be considered, then, as a fixed point among all Christians, that they ought not to hold their life more precious than the testimony to the truth, inasmuch as God wishes to be glorified thereby. Is it in vain that He gives the name of WITNESSES (for this is the meaning of the word MARTYR) to all who have to answer before the enemies of the faith? Is it not because He wishes to employ them for such a purpose? Here every one is not to look for his fellow, for God does not honor all alike with the call. And as we are inclined so to look, we must be the more on our guard against it. Peter having heard from the lips of the Lord Jesus that he should be led in his old age where he would not, asked, What was to become of his companion John? There is not one among us who could not readily have put the same; for the thought which instantly rises in our minds is, Why do I suffer rather than others? On the contrary, Jesus Christ exhorts all of us in common, and each of us in particular, to hold ourselves "ready," in order that, according as He shall call this one or that one, we may march forth in our turn.

I explained above, how little prepared we shall be to suffer martyrdom, if we be not armed with the Divine PROMISES. It now remains to show, somewhat more fully, WHAT THE PURPORT AND AIM OF THESE PROMISES ARE—not to specify them all in detail, but to show the principal things which God wishes us to hope from Him to console us in our afflictions. Now these things, taken summarily, are three. The *first* is, THAT, INASMUCH AS OUR LIFE AND DEATH ARE IN HIS HAND, HE WILL SO PRESERVE US BY HIS MIGHT THAT NOT A HAIR WILL BE PLUCKED OUT OF OUR HEADS WITHOUT HIS LEAVE. Believers, therefore, ought to feel assured, into whatever hands they may fall, that God is not divested of the guardianship which He exercises over their persons. Were such a persuasion well imprinted on our hearts, we should be delivered from the greater part of the doubts and perplexities which torment us, and obstruct us in our duty.

We see tyrants let loose: thereupon it seems to us that God no longer possesses any means of saving us, and we are tempted to provide for our own affairs as if nothing more were to be expected from Him. On the contrary, His providence, as He unfolds it, ought to be regarded by us as an impregnable fortress. Let us labor, then, to learn the full import of the expression that our bodies are in the hands of Him who created them. For this reason He has sometimes delivered His people in a miraculous manner, and beyond all human expectation, as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, from the fiery furnace; Daniel from the den of lions; Peter from Herod's prison, where he was locked in, chained, and guarded so closely. By these examples He meant to testify that He holds our enemies in check, although it may not seem so, and has power to withdraw us from the midst of death when He pleases. Not that He always does it; but in reserving authority to Himself, to dispose of us for life and death, He would have us to feel fully assured that He has us under His charge; so that whatever tyrants attempt, and with whatever fury they may rush against us, it belongs to Him alone to order our life.

If He permits tyrants to slay us, it is not because our life is not dear to Him, and in greater honor, a hundred times, than it deserves. Such being the case, having declared by the mouth of David that the death of His saints is precious in His sight, He says also, by the mouth of Isaiah, that the earth will discover the blood which seems to be concealed. Let the enemies of the Gospel, then, be as prodigal as they will of the blood of martyrs; they shall have to render a fearful account of it, even to the last drop! In the present day, they indulge in proud derision while consigning believers to the flames; and after having bathed in their blood, they are intoxicated by it to such a degree as to count all the murders they commit mere festive sport. But if we have patience to wait, God will show in the end that it is not in vain He has rated our life at so high a value! Meanwhile, let it not offend us that it seems to confirm the Gospel, which in worth surpasses heaven and earth!

To be better assured that God does not leave us as it were forsaken in the hands of tyrants, let us remember the declaration of Jesus Christ, when He says that He Himself is persecuted in His members. God had indeed said before, by Zechariah, "He who touches you, toucheth the apple of Mine eye;" but here it is said much more expressly that if we suffer for the Gospel, it is as much as if the Son of God were suffering in person. Let us know, therefore, that Jesus Christ must forget Himself before He can cease to think of us when we are in prison, or in danger of death for His cause; and let us know that God will take to heart all the outrages which tyrants commit upon us, just as if they were committed on His own Son.

Let us now come to our *second* point, which God declares to us in His promise for our consolation. It is, that He WILL SO SUSTAIN US BY THE ENERGY OF HIS SPIRIT, THAT OUR ENEMIES, DO WHAT THEY MAY, EVEN WITH SATAN AT THEIR HEAD, WILL GAIN NO ADVANTAGE OVER US. And we see how He displays His gifts in such an emergency; for the invincible constancy which appears in the martyrs, abundantly and beautifully demonstrates that God works in them mightily. In persecution there are two things grievous to the flesh, the vituperation and insult of men, and the tortures which the body suffers. Now, God promises to hold out His hand to us so effectually that we shall overcome both by patience. What He thus tells, us He confirms by fact. Let us take this buckler, then, to ward off all fears by which we are assailed; and let us not confine the workings of the Holy Spirit within such narrow limits as to suppose that He will not easily surmount all the cruelties of men. * * * * *

The *third* point for consideration, in the promises which God gives to His martyrs, is, THE FRUIT WHICH THEY OUGHT TO HOPE FOR FROM THEIR SUFFERINGS, AND, IN THE END, IF NEED BE, FROM THEIR DEATH. Now, this fruit is, that after having glorified His name, after having edified the Church by their constancy, they will be gathered together with the Lord Jesus into His immortal glory. But as we have above spoken of this at some length, it is enough here to recall it to remembrance. Let believers, then, learn to lift up their heads toward the crown of glory and immortality to which God invites them, that thus they may not feel reluctant to quit the present life for such a recompense, and to feel well assured of this inestimable blessing; let them have always before their eyes the conformity which they thus have to our Lord Jesus Christ; beholding death in the midst of life, just as He, by the reproach of the cross, attained to *the glorious resurrection*, wherein consists all our felicity, joy, and triumph!

DISCOURSE FORTY-SIXTH.

JAMES BENIGNÉ BOSSUET.

BOSSUET was born at Dijon, in Burgundy, the 27th of September, 1627, and died at Paris, 1704. From the first he exhibited remarkable fondness for study; and at the age of sixteen, astonished his friends by his precocious displays of extemporaneous eloquence. His studies for the ministry, to which he was destined from his early youth, were pursued, first in the Jesuit College at Dijon; and upon abandoning that order, he resorted to the College of Navarre, in Paris. The great orators of Greece and Rome, and the works of Chrysostom and Augustine, were enthusiastically studied and admired by him for their lofty eloquence. His first appearance in the pulpit, in Paris, produced a wide sensation, and drew crowds of admiring listeners. Soon after he was called to the Court, and appointed to deliver the Lent Sermons in 1662. The king, Louis XIV., was delighted with the young preacher, and appointed him to the See of Condom, and afterward to that of Meaux, beside conferring upon him many other honors.

The *heart* of Bossuet excites our admiration to a much less extent than does his *head*. Perhaps it is not strange that a worldly, ambitious, and proud spirit should have been begotten and fostered, amid the fascinations and corruptions that surrounded him. The favorite of the clergy, and the opponent of a pure, simple, spiritual faith, it is not surprising that he became the oppressive dictator, and tarnished his fair fame by persecuting some of the purest and best spirits of his age. But the *genius* of Bossuet, especially his powers of oratory, can scarcely be overrated. He was styled the Plato of the clergy, because he was "Philosopher, Orator, and Poet." The snarling Voltaire, who often attended his preaching, remarked that among all the elegant writers of the age, Bossuet was the only eloquent man. It is admitted by French critics that his style is as faultless as that of any writer in any tongue.

The term which characterizes the discourses of Bossuet is magnificence. His best productions are Funeral Orations; indeed most of his ordinary sermons come to us only in fragments. But those in which he celebrates the illustrious dead, exhibit the traces of a masterly skill.

Here, every stone is squared and polished, and every sentence, image, word, subjected to the severest ordeal; yet though elaborated to the highest possible degree, they are spirited, and animated with the boldest figures; and frequently rise to true sublimity of expression. They are simple, and yet majestic; triumphantly splendid, but without the affectation of pomp. His *best* Oration is that pronounced at the funeral of the great Condé. The occasion was one of surpassing interest, the orator fully comprehended and admired the character and life of him whom he celebrates, and was able to take advantage of every incident; and he entered into his subject with the highest enthusiasm. Advanced in years, he never expected to deliver another Oration of the kind; and, as he arose, himself deeply affected, and surrounded by the symbols of woe with which the great church of Nôtre Dame was hung, and the weeping crowd, made up of the rank and talent of the kingdom, he solemnly pronounced his text, and the striking introduction, and then poured forth a flood of eloquence, itself enough to immortalize his name. To adopt the criticism of another, As the orator advances he gathers strength by the force of his movement: his thoughts bound and leap like the quick and impetuous sallies of the warrior whom he describes: his language glows and sparkles, rushes and rejoices, like a free and bounding river, sweeping in beauty through the open champaign, gathering volume and strength from tributary streams, glancing through green meadows and dark woodlands, rushing through forests and mountains, and finally plunging, with resistless force and majesty, into the open sea.

FUNERAL ORATION FOR LOUIS BOURBON, PRINCE OF CONDÉ.

DELIVERED BEFORE LOUIS XIV.

"The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor. Go in this thy might. Surely I will be with thee."—JUDGES, vi. 12, 14, 16.

At the moment that I open my lips to celebrate the immortal glory of Louis Bourbon, Prince of Condé, I find myself equally overwhelmed by the greatness of the subject, and, if permitted to avow it, by the uselessness of the task. What part of the habitable world has not heard of the victories of the Prince of Condé, and the wonders of his life? Every where they are rehearsed. The Frenchman, in extolling them, can give no information to the stranger. And although I may remind you of them to day, yet, always anticipated by your thoughts, I shall have to suffer your secret reproach for falling so far below them. We feeble orators can add nothing to the glory of extraordinary souls. Well has the sage remarked that their actions alone praise them; all other praise languishes by the side of their great names. The simplicity of a faithful narrative alone can sustain the glory of the Prince of Condé. But expecting that history, which owes such a narrative to future ages, will make this appear, we must satisfy, as we can, the gratitude of the public, and the commands of the greatest of kings. What does the empire not owe to a prince who has honored the house of France, the whole French name, and, so to speak, mankind at large! Louis the Great himself has entered into these sentiments. After having mourned that great man, and given by his tears, in the presence of his whole court, the most glorious eulogy which he could receive, he gathers together in this illustrious temple whatever is most august in his kingdom, to render public acknowledgments to the memory of the Prince; and he desires that my feeble voice should animate all these mournful signs—all this funeral array. Let us then subdue our grief and make the effort.

But here a greater object, and one more worthy of the pulpit, presents itself to my thoughts. God it is who makes warriors and conquerors. "Thou," said David, "hast taught my hands to war, and my fingers to fight." If He inspires courage He gives no less other great qualities, natural and supernatural, both of the mind and heart. Every thing comes from His powerful hand; from heaven He sends all generous sentiments, wise counsels, and good thoughts. But He would have us to distinguish between the gifts which He abandons to His enemies and those which He reserves for His servants. What distinguishes His friends from all others is piety; until that gift of Heaven is received, all others are not only useless, but aid the ruin of those whom they adorn. Without this inestimable gift of piety, what were the Prince of Condé, with all his great heart and lofty genius? No, my brethren, if piety had not consecrated his other virtues, neither these princes would have found any solace for their grief, nor that venerable prelate any confidence in his prayers, nor myself any support for the praises which are due to so great a man. Under the influence of such an example, let us lose sight of all human glory! Destroy the idol of the ambitious! Let it fall prostrate before these altars! On this occasion, group together—for we can do it with propriety—the highest qualities of an excellent nature, and to the glory of truth, exhibit in a Prince universally admired whatever constitutes the hero and carries the glory of the world to the loftiest eminence, valor, magnanimity, and natural goodness—qualities of the heart; vivacity and penetration, grandeur of thought, and sublimity of genius—qualities of the intellect; all would be nothing but an illusion if piety were not added—piety, which indeed is the whole of man! This it is, messieurs, which you see in the life, eternally memorable, of the high and illustrious Prince Louis Bourbon, Prince of Condé, Prince of the blood!

God has revealed to us that He alone makes conquerors, that He alone causes them to subserve His designs. Who made Cyrus but God, who, in the prophecies of Isaiah, named him two hundred years before his birth? "Thou hast not known Me," said He to him, "but I have even called thee by thy name, and surnamed thee. I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron. I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside Me. I form the light and create darkness;" as if He had said, "I the Lord do every thing, and from eternity know every thing that I do." Who could have formed an Alexander but the same God who made him visible from afar to the prophet Daniel, and revealed by such vivid images his unconquerable ardor? "See," said He, "that conqueror, with what rapidity he advances from the west, as it were by bounds and without touching the earth." Resembling, in his bold movements and rapid march, certain vigorous and bounding animals, he advances, only by quick and impetuous attacks, and is arrested neither by mountains nor precipices. Already the King of Persia falls into his power. At sight of him, he is "moved with anger—rushes upon him, stamps him under his feet; none can defend him from his attacks, or deliver him out of his hand." Listening only to these words of Daniel, whom do you expect to see under that image—Alexander or the Prince of Condé? God had given him that indomitable valor for the salvation of France during the minority of a king of four years. But let that king, cherished of heaven, advance in life, every thing will yield to his exploits. Equally superior to his friends and his enemies, he will hasten now to employ, now to surpass his most distinguished generals; and under the hand of God, who will ever befriend him, he will be acknowledged the firm bulwark of his kingdom. But God had chosen the Duke d'Enghien* to defend him in his childhood. Thus, during the first years of his reign, the Duke conceived a design which the most experienced veterans could not achieve; but victory justified it before Rocroy! True, the hostile army is the stronger. It is composed of those old bands of Valonnaise, Italians, and Spaniards, which never till then were broken. But how much could be counted on the courage which inspired our troops, the pressing necessity of the state, past advantages, and a Prince of the blood who carried victory in his eyes! Don Francisco de Mellos steadily waits his approach; and, without the possibility of retreating, the two generals and their armies had chosen to shut themselves in by woods and marshes, in order to decide their quarrels like two warriors, in close combat. Then, what was seen? The young Prince appeared another man! Moved by so great an object, his mighty soul revealed itself entire; his courage increased with his peril, his sagacity with his ardor. During the night, which must be spent in presence of the enemy, like a vigilant general, he was the last to retire; yet never did he repose more peacefully. In the prospect of so great a day, and his first battle, he is tranquil; so much is he in his element; for well is it known that on the morrow, at the appointed time, he must awake from his profound slumber—another Alexander! See him, as he flies, either to victory or to death. As soon as he has conveyed from rank to rank the ardor which animates himself, he is seen, almost at the same time, attacking the right wing of the enemy; sustaining ours about to give way; now rallying the half-subdued Frenchman, now putting to flight the victorious Spaniard; carrying terror every where, and confounding with his lightning glance those who had escaped his blows. But that formidable infantry of the Spanish army, whose heavy and wedged battalions, resembling so many towers—towers which had succeeded in repairing their breaches—remained immovable in the midst of all others in disorder, and from all sides kept up a steady fire. Thrice the young conqueror attempted to break these intrepid warriors; thrice was he repulsed by the valorous Count de Fontaine, who was borne in his carriage, and, notwithstanding his infirmities, proved that the warrior spirit is master of the body which it animates. In vain does Bek, with his fresh cavalry, endeavor to rush through the wood to fall on our exhausted soldiers; the Prince has prevented him; the routed battalions demand quarter: but victory is more disastrous to the Duke d'Enghien than conflict itself. As he advances with an assured air to receive the parole of those brave men, they, ever on their guard, are seized with the fear of being surprised by a new attack;—their terrible discharge renders our army furious; nothing is seen but carnage; blood maddens the soldier; until that great Prince, who could not slaughter those lions like timid sheep, calmed their excited courage, and joined to the pleasure of conquering that of pardoning his enemies. What then was the astonishment of those veteran troops and their brave officers, when they saw that there was no safety but in the arms of the conqueror! With what wonder did they look upon that young Prince, whose victory had enhanced his lofty bearing, and whose clemency added to it a new charm! Ah, how willingly would he have saved the brave Duke de Fontaine! But he was found prostrate among thousands of the dead, of whom Spain yet feels the loss. She knew not that the Prince who had destroyed so many of her veteran regiments on the field of Rocroy, would complete their subjugation on the plains of Lens. Thus the first victory was the pledge of many more. The Prince bends the knee, and on the battle-field renders back to the God of armies the glory which He had conferred. There they celebrated Rocroy delivered, the threatenings of a formidable army turned to shame, the regency established, France in repose, and a reign, destined to such prosperity, begun by an omen so happy. The army commenced the thanksgiving: all France followed. The first achievement of the Duke d'Enghien was extolled to the skies. Such an event was enough to render illustrious any other life; but in his case, it was but the first step in his career.

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* The original name of the Prince of Condé.

From that first campaign, after the taking of Thionville, noble fruit of the victory at Rocroy, he passed for a general equally invincible in sieges and battles. But observe in this young Prince what is not less beautiful than victory. The court, which had prepared for him the applause which he merited, was astonished at the manner in which he received it. The queen-regent testified to him that the king was satisfied with his services. In the mouth of the sovereign, that was a recompense worthy of his toils. But if others ventured to praise him, he rejected their praises as offensive. Intractable to flattery, he dreaded its very appearance. Such was the delicacy, or rather such was the good sense of the Prince. His maxim was—and you will please to notice it, for it is the maxim which makes great men—that in great actions our only care ought to be to perform well our part, and let glory follow virtue. This he inspired in others, this he *followed* himself, so that he was never tempted by false glory; every thing in him tended to the true and the great. Whence it followed that he placed his glory in the service of the king and the prosperity of the state. This was the fundamental principle of his life—this engrossed his last and most cherished feelings. The court could scarcely hold him, though he was the object of its admiration. He must show himself every where, to Germany as to Flanders, the intrepid defender given us by God.

Here direct your special attention! A contest awaits the Prince more formidable than Rocroy: to prove his virtue, war is about to exhaust all its inventions, all its efforts. What object presents itself to my eyes? Not only men to combat, but inaccessible mountains, ravines, and precipices on one side; on the other an impenetrable wood, the bottom of which is a marsh; behind, streams and prodigious intrenchments; every where lofty forts, and leveled forests traversed by frightful roads; in the midst Merci with his brave Bavarians, flushed with such distinguished success, and the taking of Fribourg;—Merci, whom the Prince of Condé and the vigilant Turenne had never surprised in an irregular movement, and to whom they rendered the distinguished testimony that he never lost a favorable opportunity, and never failed to foresee their plans, as if he had assisted at their councils. Here, during eight days, and in four different attacks, was seen all that could be endured and undertaken in war. Our troops seemed disheartened as much by the resistance of the enemy as by the frightful disposition of the ground; and the Prince at times saw himself almost abandoned. But like another Maccabeus, "his own arm never failed him;" and his courage, excited by so many perils, "brought him succor." No sooner was he seen the first to force those inaccessible heights, than his ardor drew all others after him. Merci sees his destruction certain: his best regiments are defeated; the night saves the remains of his army. But what excessive rains also come to the enemy's aid, so that we have at once not only courage and art, but all nature to contend with; what advantage of this is taken by a bold and dexterous enemy, and in what frightful mountain does he anew intrench himself! But, beaten on all sides, he must leave, as booty to the Duke d'Enghien, not only his cannon and baggage, but also all the regions bordering on the Rhine. See how the whole gives way. In ten days Philisbourg is reduced, notwithstanding the approach of winter, Philisbourg, which so long held the Rhine captive under our laws, and whose loss the most illustrious of kings has so gloriously repaired. Worms, Spire, Mayence, Landau, and twenty other places of note open their gates. Merci can not defend them, and no longer appears before his conqueror. But this is not enough; he must fall at his feet, a victim worthy of his valor: Nordlingen shall see his fall;—then shall it be decided that their enemies can not stand before the French, either in Germany or Flanders; and there shall it be seen, that to the Prince all these advantages are due. God, the Protector of France and of a king, whom He has destined for His mighty works, ordains it thus.

By such arrangements, every thing appeared safe under the conduct of the Duke d'Enghien; and without wishing to spend the day in recounting his other exploits, you know that among so many places attacked not one escaped his hands; and thus the glory of the Prince continued to rise. Europe, which admired the noble ardor by which he was animated in his battles, was astonished to perceive that he had perfect self-control; and that at the age of twenty-six years, he was as capable of managing his troops, as of urging them into perils; of yielding to fortune, as of causing it to subserve his designs. In all situations he appears to us one of those extraordinary men who force all obstacles. The promptitude of his action leaves no time for its contravention. Such is the character of conquerors. When David, himself a great warrior, deplored the death of two captains, he gave them this eulogy: "They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions." Such is the very image of the Prince whom we deplore. Like lightning, he appeared at the same time in different and distant places. He was seen in all attacks, in all quarters. When occupied on one side, he sends to reconnoitre the other; the active officer who conveys his orders is anticipated, and finds all reanimated by the presence of the Prince. He seems to multiply himself in action; neither fire nor steel arrests his progress. No need has he to arm his head exposed to so many perils; God is his assured armor; blows lose their force as they reach him, and leaves behind only the tokens of his courage and of the protection of Heaven. Tell him not that the life of the first Prince of the blood, so necessary to the state, ought to be spared; he answers that such a Prince, more interested by his birth in the glory of the king and crown, ought, in the extremity of the state, more readily than all others to devote himself to its recovery. After having made his enemies, during so many years, feel the invincible power of the king; were it asked, What did he do to sustain it at home? I would answer, in a word, he made the Regent respected.* And since it is proper for me once for all, to speak of those things respecting which I desire to be forever silent,† it may be stated, that up to the time of that unfortunate imprisonment, he had never dreamed that it was possible for him to attempt any thing against the state; and to his honor be it said, if he desired to secure a recompense, he desired still more to merit it. It was this which caused him to say—and here I can confidently repeat his words, which I received from his own lips, and which so strikingly indicate his true disposition—that "he had entered that prison the most innocent of men, and that he had issued from it the most culpable. Alas!" said he, "I lived only for the service of the king, and the honor of the state." Words which indicate a sincere regret for having been carried so far by his misfortunes. But without excusing what he himself so strongly condemned, let us say, so that it may never again be mentioned, that as in celestial glory, the faults of holy penitents, covered by what they have done to repair them, and the infinite compassion of God, never more appear; so in the faults so sincerely acknowledged, and in the end so gloriously repaired by faithful services, nothing ought to be remembered but the penitence of the Prince, and the clemency of his sovereign who has forgotten them.

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* The Queen-Mother, who was regent during the minority of Louis XIV.

† Bossuet here refers to the part taken by the Prince of Condé in the civil war of the Fronde.

However much he was involved in those unfortunate wars, he has at least this glory, never to have permitted the grandeur of his House to be tarnished among strangers. Notwithstanding the majesty of the Empire, the pride of Austria, and the hereditary crowns attached to that House, particularly in the branch which reigns in Germany; even when a refugee at Namur, and sustained only by his courage and reputation, he urged the claims of a Prince of France and of the first family in the world so far that all that could be obtained from him was his consent to treat upon equality with the Archduke, through a brother of the Emperor, and the descendant of so many Emperors, on condition that the Prince in the third degree, should wear the honors of the "Low Countries." The same treatment was secured to the Duke d'Enghien; and the House of France maintained its rank over that of Austria even in Brussels. But mark what constitutes true courage. While the Prince bore himself so loftily with the Archduke who governed, he rendered to the King of England and the Duke of York, now so great a monarch, but then unfortunate, all the honors which were their due; and finally he taught Spain, too disdainful, what that majesty was which misfortune could not tear from princes. The rest of his conduct was not less distinguished. Amid the difficulties which his interests introduced into the Treaty of the Pyrenees, hear what were his orders, and see whether any one ever acted so nobly, with reference to his own interests. He wrote to his agents in the conference, that it was not right that the peace of Christendom should be postponed for his sake; that they might take care of his friends, but must leave him to his fate. Ah, what a noble victim thus sacrificed himself for the public good! But when things changed, and Spain was willing to give him either Cambray and its environs, or Luxembourg in full sovereignty; he declared that to these advantages, and all others, however great, which they could give him, he preferred—what? His duty and the good will of the king! This formed the ruling passion of his heart. This he was incessantly repeating to the Duke d'Enghien, his son. Thus did he appear himself! France beheld him, in these last traits, returning to her bosom with a character ennobled by suffering, and more than ever devoted to his king and country. But in those first wars he had but one life to offer; now he has another which is dearer to him than his own. After having, under his father's example, nobly finished his studies, the Duke d'Enghien is ready to follow him to the battle-field. Not content with teaching him the art of war by his instructions, he conducts him to living lessons and actual practice. Leave we the passage of the Rhine, the wonder of our age, and the life of Louis the Great. In the field of Senef, although he commanded, as he had already done in other campaigns, he learned war by the side of his father, in the most terrible conflicts. In the midst of so many perils, he sees the Prince thrown down in a trench, under a horse covered with blood. While offering him his own and raising him from the trench, he is wounded in the arms of his affectionate father, but without discontinuing his kind offices, delighted with the opportunity of satisfying at once his filial piety and love of glory. How could the Prince fail to think that nothing was wanting to that noble son but opportunities, to achieve the greatest things. Moreover his tenderness increased with his esteem.

But not only for his son and his family did he cherish such tender sentiments. I have seen him (and do not imagine that I exaggerate here) deeply moved with the perils of his friends; I have seen him, simple and natural, change color at the recital of their misfortunes, entering into their minutest as well as most important affairs, reconciling contending parties, and calming angry spirits with a patience and gentleness which could never have been expected from a temper so sensitive, and a rank so high. Far from us be heroes without humanity! As in the case of all extraordinary things, they might force our respect and seduce our admiration, but they could never win our love. When God formed the heart of man He planted goodness there, as the proper characteristic of the Divine nature, and the mark of that beneficent hand from which we sprang. Goodness, then, ought to be the principal element of our character, and the great means of attracting the affection of others. Greatness, which supervenes upon this, so far from diminishing goodness, ought only to enable it, like a public fountain, to diffuse itself more extensively. This is the price of hearts! For the great, whose goodness is not diffusive, as a just punishment of their haughty indifference, remain forever deprived of the greatest good of life, the fellowship of kindred souls. Never did man enjoy this more than the Prince of whom we are speaking. Never did one less fear that familiarity would diminish respect. Is this the man that stormed cities and gained battles? Have I forgotten the high rank he knew so well to defend. Let us acknowledge the hero, who, always equal to himself, without rising to appear great, or descending to be civil and kind, naturally appeared every thing that he ought to be toward all men, like a majestic and beneficent river, which peacefully conveys from city to city, the abundance which it has spread through the countries which it waters; which flows for the benefit of all, and rises and swells only when some violent opposition is made to the gentle current which bears it on its tranquil course. Such was the gentleness and such the energy of the Prince of Condé. Have you an important secret? Confide it freely to that noble heart; your affair becomes his by that confidence. Nothing was more inviolable to that Prince than the rights of friendship. When a favor was asked of him, it was he that appeared obliged; and never was his joy so natural or lively, as when he conferred pleasure upon others. The first money which, by the permission of the king, he received from Spain, notwithstanding the necessities of his exhausted house, was given to his friends, although he had nothing to hope from their friendship after the peace. Four hundred thousand crowns, distributed by his orders—rare instance of generosity—showed that gratitude was as powerful in the Prince of Condé as selfishness is in most men. With him virtue was ever its own reward. He praised it even in his enemies. Whenever he had occasion to speak of his actions, and even in the communications which he sent to the court, he extolled the wise counsels of one, and the courage of another; the merits of none were overlooked; and in his anxiety to do others justice he never seemed to find a place for what he had done himself. Without envy, without disguise or pretension; equally great in action and in repose, he appeared at Chantilly as he did at the head of his troops. Whether he embellished that magnificent and charming home, whether he planted his camp, or fortified a place in the midst of a hostile country—whether he marched with an army amid perils, or conducted his friends through superb alleys to the noise of falling fountains silent neither by day nor night, he was always the same man; his glory followed him every where. How delightful, after the contest and tumult of arms, to be able to relish those peaceful virtues, and that tranquil glory which none can share with the soldier more than with fortune; where one can pursue *the great end of life* without being stunned with the noise of trumpets, the roar of cannons, or the cries of the wounded; and when all alone, man appears as great, and as worthy of respect as when he gives the word of command, and whole armies do his bidding.

Let us now look at the qualities of his intellect; and since, alas! that which is most fatal to human life, namely, the military art, admits of the greatest genius and talent, let us in the first place consider the great genius of the Prince with reference to that department. And in the first place what general ever displayed such far-reaching foresight? One of his maxims was, that we ought to fear enemies at a distance, in order not to fear them near at hand—nay more, to rejoice in their approach. See, as he considers all the advantages which he can give or take, with what rapidity he comprehends times, places, persons, and not only their interests and talents, but even their humors and caprices! See how he estimates the cavalry and infantry of his enemies, by the nature of the country, or the resources of the confederated princes! Nothing escapes his penetration. With what prodigious comprehension of the entire details and general plan of the war, he is ever awake to the occurrence of the slightest incident; drawing from a deserter, a prisoner, a passer-by, what he wishes him to say or to conceal, what he knows, and, so to speak, what he does not know, so certain is he in his conclusions. His patrols repeat to him the slightest things: he is ever on the watch, for he holds it as a maxim, that an able general may be vanquished, but ought never to suffer himself to be surprised. And it is due to him to say that this never occurred in his case. At whatever, or from whatever quarter his enemies come, they find him on his guard, always ready to fall upon them, and take advantage of their position; like an eagle, which, whether soaring in mid air, or perched upon the summit of some lofty rock, sweeps the landscape with his piercing eyes, and falls so surely upon his prey, that it can neither escape his talons, nor his lightning glance. So keen his perception, so quick and impetuous his attack, so strong and irresistible the hands of the Prince of Condé. In his camp vain terrors, which fatigue and discourage more than real ones, are unknown. All strength remains entire for true perils; all is ready at the first signal, and as saith the prophet, "All arrows are sharpened, all bows bent." While waiting, he enjoys as sound repose as he would under his own roof. Repose, did I say? At Pieton, in the presence of that formidable army which three united powers had assembled, our troops indulged in constant amusements, the whole army was rejoicing, and never for a moment felt that it was weaker than the enemy The Prince, by the disposition of his army, had put in safety, not only our whole frontier, and all our stations, but also our soldiers; he watches—that is enough! At last the enemy moves off—precisely what the Prince expected. At their first movement he starts; the army of Holland, with its proud standards, is already in his power—blood flows every where—the whole becomes his prey. But God knows how to limit the best formed plans. The enemy is every where scattered. Oudenarde is delivered out of their hands; but they themselves are saved out of those of the Prince by a dense cloud, which covers the heavens; terror and desertion enter the troops; none can tell what has become of that formidable army. Then it was that Louis, after having accomplished the rude siege of Besançon, and once more reduced Franche Comté, with unparalleled rapidity, returned, irradiated with glory, to profit by the action of his armies in Flanders and Germany, and commanded the army which performed such prodigies in Alsace; thus appearing the greatest of heroes, as much by his personal exploits, as by those of his generals.

While a happy disposition imparted such noble traits to our Prince, he never ceased to enrich it by reflection. The campaigns of Cæsar formed the subject of his study. Well do I recollect how much he interested us by indicating, with all the precision of a catalogue, the place where that celebrated general, by the advantageous nature of his positions, compelled five Roman legions, and two experienced leaders, to lay down their arms without a struggle. He himself had explored the rivers and mountains which aided in the accomplishment of that grand result; and never before had so accomplished a teacher explained the Commentaries of Cæsar. The generals of a future age will render him the same homage. They will be seen studying in the places where it took place, what history will relate of the encampment of Pieton, and the wonders that followed. They will notice, in that of Chatenoy, the eminence occupied by that great captain, and the stream where he covered himself from the cannon of the intrenchments of Selestad. Then will they see him putting Germany to shame—now pursuing his enemies, though stronger; now counteracting their schemes; and now causing them to raise the siege of Saverne, as he had that of Haguenau, a little while before. It was by strokes like these, of which his life is full, that he carried his fame to such a height that in the present day it is one of the highest honors to have served in the army of the

Prince of Condé, and even a title to command to have seen him perform that duty.

But if ever he appeared great, and by his wondrous self-possession, superior to all exigencies, it was in those critical moments upon which victory turns, and in the deepest ardor of battle. In all other circumstances he deliberates—docile, he lends an ear to the counsels of all; but here every thing is presented to him at once; the multiplicity of objects confounds him not; in an instant his part is taken; he commands, he acts together; every thing is made to subserve his purpose. Shall I add, for why fear the reputation of so great a man should be diminished by the acknowledgment, that he was distinguished not only by his quick sallies which he knew so promptly and agreeably to repair, but that he sometimes appeared, on ordinary occasions, as if he had in him another nature, to which his great soul abandoned minor details, in which he himself deigned not to mingle. In the fire, the shock, the confusion of battle, all at once sprung up in him—I know not what firmness and clearness, what ardor and grace—so attractive to his friends, so terrible to his enemies—a combination of qualities and contrasts, at once singular and striking. In that terrible engagement, when before the gates of the city, and in the sight of the citizens, Heaven seemed to decide the fate of the Prince; when he had against him choice troops and a powerful general—when, more than once, he saw himself exposed to the caprices of fortune—when, in a word, he was attacked on every side, those who were fighting near him have told us that if they had an affair of importance to transact with him, they would have chosen for it that very moment when the fires of battle were raging around him; so much did his spirit appear elevated above them, and, as it were, inspired in such terrible encounters; like those lofty mountains, whose summits, rising above clouds and storms, find their serenity in their elevation, and lose not a single ray of the light by which they are enveloped. Thus on the plains of Lens, name agreeable to France! the Archduke, drawn contrary to his design from an advantageous position, through the influence of a false success, is forced, by a sudden movement of the Prince, who opposes fresh troops to those already exhausted, to take flight. His veteran troops perish; his cannon, which he relied on, falls into our hands; and Bek, who had flattered himself with certain victory, taken and wounded in the battle, renders, by his dying despair, a mournful homage to his conqueror. Is it necessary to relieve or besiege a city? The Prince knows how to profit by every opportunity. Thus, being suddenly informed of an important siege, he passes at once, by a rapid march, to the place, and discovers a safe passage through which to give relief, at a spot not sufficiently fortified by the enemy. Does he lay siege to a place? Each day he invents some new means of advancing its conquest. Some have thought that he exposed his troops; but he protected them by abridging the time of peril through the vigor of his attacks. Amid so many surprising blows the most courageous governors can not make good their promises to their generals. Dunkirk is taken in thirteen days amid the rains of autumn; and those ships, so renowned among our allies, all at once appear upon the ocean with our flags.

But what a wise general ought especially to know, is his soldiers and officers. For thence comes that perfect concert which enables armies to act as one body, or to use the language of Scripture, "as one man." But how as one man? Because under one chief, that knows both soldiers and officers, as if they were his arms and hands, all is equally animated, all is equally moved. This it is which secures victory; for I have heard our great Prince say that, in the battle of Nordlingen, what gained success was his knowledge of M. de Turenne, whose consummate genius needed no order to perform whatever was necessary. The latter, on his side, declared that he acted without anxiety, because he knew the Prince, and his directions which were always safe. Thus they imparted to each other a mutual confidence which enabled them to apply themselves wholly to their respective parts; and thus happily ended the most hazardous and keenly contested battle that was ever fought!

That was a noble spectacle in our day to behold, at the same time, and in the same campaign, these two men, whom the common voice of all Europe equaled to the greatest generals of past ages—now at the head of separate troops, now united, yet more by the concurrence of the same thoughts, than by the orders which the inferior received from the other; now opposed front to front, and redoubling the one in the other activity and vigilance;—as if the Deity, whose wisdom, according to the Scriptures, disports itself in the universe, would show us under what perfect forms, and with what excellent qualities He can endow men. What encampments and what marches! what hazards and precautions! what perils and resources! Were ever in two men seen the same virtues, with such diverse not to say contrary characteristics! The one seemed to act from profound reflection; the other from sudden illumination; the latter consequently was more ardent, though by no means precipitate, while the former, with an appearance of greater coolness, never exhibited any thing like languor—ever more ready to act than to speak, resolute and determined within, even when he seemed hesitating and cautious without. The one, as soon as he appeared in the army, gave a high idea of his valor, and caused an expectation of something extraordinary; nevertheless he advanced systematically, and by degrees reached the prodigies which crowned his life; the other, like a man inspired, from his first battle equaled the most consummate masters. The one by his rapid and constant efforts won the admiration of the world, and silenced all envy; the other, at the very first, reflected such a vivid light that none dared to attack him. The one, in fine, by the depth of his genius and the incredible resources of his courage, rose superior to the greatest dangers, and profited even by the infelicities of fortune; the other, at once by the advantages of his elevated birth, and the lofty thoughts by which he was inspired from heaven, and especially by an admirable instinct of which men know not the secret, seemed born to draw fortune into his plans, and to force destiny itself. And as in their life, those great men were seen distinguished by diverse characteristics, so the one, cut down by a sudden blow, like a Judas Maccabeus, dies for his country; the army mourns him as a father; the court and country are covered with tears; his piety is praised with his courage, and his memory fades not with time;* the other, raised, like a David, by his arms to the summit of glory, like him also dies in his bed, celebrating the praises of God and giving instructions to his family, and thus leave all hearts filled as much with the splendor of his life as the serenity of his death. What a privilege to see and to study these great men, and learn from each the esteem which the other merits. This has been the spectacle of our age; but what is greater still, we have seen a king making use of these great generals, and enjoying the succor of heaven; and being deprived of the one by death, and of the other by his maladies, conceiving the greatest plans, and performing the noblest deeds, rising above himself, surpassing the hopes of his friends and the expectations of the world; so lofty is his courage, so vast his intelligence, so glorious his destiny.†

Such, messieurs, are the spectacles which God gives to the world, and the men whom He sends into it, to illustrate, now in one nation, now in another, according to His eternal counsels, His power and His wisdom. For, do His Divine attributes discover themselves more clearly in the heavens which His fingers have formed, than in the rare talents which He has distributed, as it pleases Him, to extraordinary men? What star shines more brilliantly in the firmament, than the Prince de Condé has done in Europe? Not war alone gave him renown; but his resplendent genius which embraced every thing, ancient as well as modern, history, philosophy, theology the most sublime, the arts and the sciences. None possessed a book which he had not read; no man of excellence existed, with whom he had not, in some speculation or in some work, conversed; all left him instructed by his penetrating questions or judicious reflections. His conversation too, had a charm, because he knew how to speak to every one according to his talents; not merely to warriors on their enterprises, to courtiers on their interests, to politicians on their negotiations, but even to curious travelers on their discoveries in nature, government or commerce; to the artisan on his inventions, and in fine to the learned of all sorts, on their productions. That gifts like these come from God, who can doubt? That they are worthy of admiration, who does not see? But to confound the human spirit which prides itself upon these gifts, God hesitates not to confer them upon His enemies. St. Augustin considers among the heathen, so many sages, so many conquerors, so many grave legislators, so many excellent citizens—a Socrates, a Marcus Aurelius, a Scipio, a Cæsar, an Alexander, all deprived of the knowledge of God, and excluded from His eternal kingdom. Is it not God then who has made them? Who else could do so but He who made every thing in heaven, and in the earth? But why has He done so? what in this case are the particular designs of that infinite wisdom which makes nothing in vain? Hear the response of St. Augustin. "He has made them," says he, "that they might adorn the present world." He has made the rare qualities of those great men, as He made the sun. Who admires not that splendid luminary; who is not ravished with his midday radiance, and the gorgeous beauty of his rising or decline? But as God has made it to shine upon the evil and upon the good, such an object, beautiful as it is, can not render us happy; God has made it to embellish and illumine this great theater of the universe. So also when He has made, in His enemies as well as in His servants, those beautiful lights of the mind, those rays of His intelligence, those images of His goodness; it is not that these alone can secure our happiness. They are but a decoration of the universe, an ornament of the age. See moreover the melancholy destiny of those men who are chosen to be the ornaments of their age. What do such rare men desire but the praise and the glory which men can give? God, perhaps to confound them will refuse that glory to their vain desires! No:—He confounds them rather by giving it to them, and even beyond their expectation. That Alexander who desired only to make a noise in the world, has made it even more than he dared to hope. Thus he must find himself in all our panegyrics, and, by a species of glorious fatality, so to speak, partake of all the praises conferred upon every prince. If the great actions of the Romans required a recompense, God knows how to bestow one correspondent to their merits as well as their desires. For a recompense He gives them the empire of the world, as a thing of no value. O kings! humble yourselves in your greatness: conquerors, boast not your victories! He gives them, for recompense, the glory of men; a recompense which never reaches them; a recompense which we endeavor to attach to—what? To their medals or their statues disinterred from the dust, the refuse of years and barbarian violence; to the ruins of their monuments and works, which contend with time, or rather to their idea, their shadow, or what they call their name! Such is the glorious prize of all their labors; such, in the very attainment of their wishes, is the conviction of their error! Come, satisfy yourselves, ye great men of earth! Grasp, if you can, that phantom of glory, after the example of the great men whom ye admire. God who punishes their pride in the regions of despair, envies them not, as St. Augustin says, that glory so much desired; "vain, they have received a recompense as vain as their desires."

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* Turenne was cut in two by a cannon ball.

† This adulation of Louis XIV. will be taken at what it is worth.

But not thus shall it be with our illustrious Prince. The hour of God is come; hour anticipated, hour desired, hour of mercy and of grace. Without being alarmed by disease, or pressed by time, He executes what He designed. A judicious ecclesiastic, whom he had expressly called, performs for him the offices of religion; he listens, humble Christian, to his instructions; indeed, no one ever doubted his good faith. From that time he is seen seriously occupied with the care of vanquishing himself; rising superior to his insupportable pains, making, by his submission, a constant sacrifice. God, whom he invoked by faith, gave him a relish for the Scriptures; and in that Divine Book, he found the substantial nurture of piety. His counsels were more and more regulated by justice; he solaced the widow and orphan, the poor approached him with confidence. A serious as well as an affectionate father, in the pleasant intercourse which he enjoyed with his children, he never ceased to inspire them with sentiments of true virtue; and that young prince, his grandchild, will forever feel himself indebted to his training. His entire household profited by his example. * * These, messieurs, these simple things—governing his family, edifying his domestics, doing justice and mercy, accomplishing the good which God enjoins, and suffering the evils which He sends—these are the common practices of the Christian life which Jesus Christ will applaud before His Father and the holy angels. But histories will be destroyed with empires; no more will they speak of the splendid deeds with which they are filled. While he passed his life in such occupations, and carried beyond that of his most famous actions the glory of a retreat so good and pious, the news of the illness of the Duchess de Bourbon reached Chantilly,* like a clap of thunder. Who was not afraid to see that rising light extinguished? It was apprehended that her condition was worse than it proved. What, then, were the feelings of the Prince of Condé, when he saw himself threatened with the loss of that new tie of his family to the person of the king? Was it on such an occasion that the hero must die? Must he who had passed through so many sieges and battles perish through his tenderness? Overwhelmed by anxieties produced by so frightful a calamity, his heart, which so long sustained itself alone, yields to the blow; his strength is exhausted. If he forgets all his feebleness at the sight of the king approaching the sick princess; if transported by his zeal, he runs, without assistance, to avert the perils which that great king does not fear, by preventing his approach, he falls exhausted before he has taken four steps—a new and affecting way of exposing his life for the king. Although the Duchess d'Enghien, a princess, whose virtue never feared to perform her duty to her family and friends, had obtained leave to remain with him, to solace him, she did not succeed in assuaging his anxieties; and after the young princess was beyond danger, the malady of the king caused new troubles to the Prince. * * * The Prince of Condé grew weaker, but death concealed his approach. When he seemed to be somewhat restored, and the Duke d'Enghien, ever occupied between his duties as a son and his duties as a subject, had returned by his order to the king, in an instant all was changed, and his approaching death was announced to the Prince. Christians, give attention, and here learn to die, or rather learn not to wait for the last hour, to begin to live well. What! expect to commence a new life when, seized by the freezing grasp of death, ye know not whether ye are among the living or the dead? Ah! prevent, by penitence, that hour of trouble and darkness! Thus, without being surprised at that final sentence communicated to him, the Prince remains for a moment in silence, and then all at once exclaims: "Thou dost will it, O my God; Thy will be done! Give me grace to die well!" What more could you desire? In that brief prayer you see submission to the will of God, reliance on His providence, trust in His grace, and all devotion. From that time, such as he had been in all combats, serene, self-possessed, and occupied without anxiety, only with what was necessary to sustain them—such also he was in that last conflict. Death appeared to him no more frightful, pale and languishing, than amid the fires of battle and in the prospect of victory. While sobbings were heard all around him, he continued, as if another than himself were their object, to give his orders; and if he forbade them weeping, it was not because it was a distress to him, but simply a hinderance. At that time, he extended his cares to the least of his domestics. With a liberality worthy of his birth and of their services, he loaded them with gifts, and honored them still more with mementoes of his regard. * * * *

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* The residence of the Prince de Condé

The manner in which he began to acquit himself of his religious duties, deserves to be recounted throughout the world; not because it was particularly remarkable; but rather because it was, so to speak, not such;—for it seemed singular that a Prince so much under the eye of the world, should furnish so little to spectators. Do not then, expect those magniloquent words which serve to reveal, if not a concealed pride, at least an agitated soul, which combat or dissembles its secret trouble. The Prince of Condé knew not how to utter such pompous sentences; in death, as in life, truth ever formed his true grandeur. His confession was humble, full of penitence and trust. He required no long time to prepare it; the best preparation for such a confession is not to wait for it as a last resort. But give attention to what follows. At the sight of the holy Viaticum, which he so much desired, see how deeply he is affected. Then he remembers the irreverence with which, alas! he had sometimes dishonored that divine mystery. * * * Calling to mind all the sins which he had committed, but too feeble to give utterance to his intense feelings, he borrowed the voice of his confessor to ask pardon of the world, of his domestics, and of his friends. They replied with their tears. Ah! reply ye now, profiting by that example! The other duties of religion were performed with the same devotion and self-possession. With what faith and frequency did he, kissing the cross, pray the Saviour of the world that His blood, shed for him, might not prove in vain. This it is which justifies the sinner, which sustains the righteous, which reassures the Christian! * * * Three times did he cause the prayers for those in anguish to be repeated, and ever with renewed consolation. In thanking his physicians, "See," said he, "my true physicians," pointing to the ecclesiastics to whose teachings he had listened, and in whose prayers he joined. The Psalms were always upon his lips, and formed the joy of his heart. If he complained, it was only that he suffered so little in reparation for his sins. Sensible to the last of the tenderness of his friends, he never permitted himself to be overcome by it; on the contrary, he was afraid of yielding too much to nature. What shall I say of his last interview with the Duke d'Enghien? What colors are vivid enough to represent to you the constancy of the father, the extreme grief of the son? Bathed in tears, his voice choked with sobs, he clasps his dying father, then falls back, then again rushes into his arms, as if by such means he would retain that dear object of his affection; his strength gives way, and he falls at his feet. The Prince, without being moved, waits for his recovery; then calling the Duchess, his daughter-in-law, whom he also sees speechless, and almost without life, with a tenderness in which nothing of weakness is visible, he gives them his last commands, all of which are instinct with piety. He closes with those prayers which God ever hears, like Jacob, invoking a blessing upon them, and upon each of their children in particular. Nor shall I forget thee, O Prince, his dear nephew, nor the glorious testimony which he constantly tendered to your merit, nor his tender zeal on your behalf, nor the letter which he wrote, when dying, to reinstate you in the favor of the king—the dearest object of your wishes—nor the noble qualities which made you worthy to occupy, with so much interest, the last hours of so good a life. Nor shall I forget the goodness of the king, which anticipated the desires of the dying Prince; nor the generous cares of the Duke d'Enghien, who promoted that favor, nor the satisfaction which he felt in fulfilling the wishes of his dying father. While his heart is expanded, and his voice animated in praising the king, the Prince de Contí arrives, penetrated with gratitude and grief. His sympathies are renewed afresh; and the two Princes hear what they will never permit to escape from their heart. The Prince concludes, by assuring them that they could never be great men, nor great princes, nor honorable persons, except so far as they possessed real goodness, and were faithful to God and the king. These were the last words which he left engraven on their memory—this was the last token of his affection—the epitome of their duties.

All were in tears, and weeping aloud. The Prince alone was unmoved; trouble came not into that asylum where he had cast himself. O God, Thou wert his strength and his refuge, and as David says, the immovable rock upon which he placed his confidence. * * * * * Tranquil in the arms of his God, he waited for his salvation, and implored His support, until he finally ceased to breathe. And here our lamentations ought to break forth at the loss of so great a man. But for the love of the truth, and the shame of those who despise it, listen once more to that noble testimony which he bore to it in dying. Informed by his confessor that if our heart is not entirely right with God, we must, in our addresses, ask God Himself to make it such as He pleases, and address Him in the affecting language of David, "O God, create in me a clean heart." Arrested by these words, the Prince pauses, as if occupied with some great thought; then calling the ecclesiastic who had suggested the idea, he says: "I have never doubted the mysteries of religion, as some have reported." Christians, you ought to believe him; for in the state he then was, he owed to the world nothing but truth. "But," added he, "I doubt them less than ever. May these truths," he continued, "reveal and develop themselves more and more clearly in my mind. Yes!" says he, "we shall see God as He is, face to face!" With a wonderful relish he repeated in Latin those lofty words—"As He is—face to face!" Nor could those around him grow weary of seeing him in so sweet a transport. What was then taking place in that soul? What new light dawned upon him? What sudden ray pierced the cloud, and instantly dissipated, not only all the darkness of sense, but the very shadows, and if I dare to say it, the sacred obscurities of faith? What then became of those splendid titles by which our pride is flattered. On the very verge of glory, and in the dawning of a light so beautiful, how rapidly vanish the phantoms of the world! How dim appears the splendor of the most glorious victory! How profoundly we despise the glory of the world, and how deeply regret that our eyes were ever dazzled by its radiance. Come, ye people, come now—or rather ye Princes and Lords, ye judges of the earth, and ye who open to man the portals of heaven; and more than all others, ye Princes and Princesses, nobles descended from a long line of kings, lights of France, but to-day in gloom, and covered with your grief, as with a cloud, come and see how little remains of a birth so august, a grandeur so high, a glory so dazzling. Look around on all sides, and see all that magnificence and devotion can do to honor so great a hero; titles and inscriptions, vain signs of that which is no more—shadows which weep around a tomb, fragile images of a grief which time sweeps away with every thing else; columns which appear as if they would bear to heaven the magnificent evidence of our emptiness; nothing, indeed, is wanting in all these honors but he to whom they are rendered! Weep then over these feeble remains of human life; weep over that mournful immortality we give to heroes. But draw near especially ye who run, with such ardor, the career of glory, intrepid and warrior spirits! Who was more worthy to command you, and in whom did ye find command more honorable? Mourn then that great Captain, and weeping, say: "Here is the man that led us through all hazards, under whom were formed so many renowned captains, raised by his example, to the highest honors of war; his shadow might yet gain battles, and lo! in his silence, his very name animates us, and at the same time warns us, that to find, at death, some rest from our toils, and not arrive unprepared at our eternal dwelling, we must, with an earthly king, yet serve the King of Heaven." Serve then that immortal and ever merciful King, who will value a sigh or a cup of cold water, given in His name, more than all others will value the shedding of your blood. And begin to reckon the time of your useful services from the day on which you gave yourselves to so beneficent a Master. Will not ye too come, ye whom he honored by making you his friends? To whatever extent you enjoyed his confidence, come all of you, and surround this tomb. Mingle your prayers with your tears; and while admiring, in so great a prince, a friendship so excellent, an intercourse so sweet, preserve the remembrance of a hero whose goodness equaled his courage. Thus may he ever prove your cherished instructor; thus may you profit by his virtues; and may his death, which you deplore, serve you at once for consolation and example. For myself, if permitted, after all others, to render the last offices at this tomb, O prince, the worthy subject of our praises and regrets, thou wilt live forever in my memory. There will thy image be traced, but not with that bold aspect which promises victory. No, I would see in you nothing which death can efface. You will have in that image only immortal traits. I shall behold you such as you were in your last hours under the hand of God, when His glory began to dawn upon you. There shall I see you more triumphant than at Fribourg and at Rocroy; and ravished by so glorious a triumph, I shall give thanks in the beautiful words of the well-beloved disciple, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Enjoy, O prince, this victory, enjoy it forever, through the everlasting efficacy of that sacrifice.* Accept these last efforts of a voice once familiar to you. With you these discourses shall end. Instead of deploring the death of others, great prince, I would henceforth learn from you to render my own holy; happy, if reminded by these white locks of the account which I must give of my ministry; I reserve for the flock, which I have to feed with the word of life, the remnants of a voice which falters, and an ardor which is fading away.

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* The sacrifice of the mass, which concluded the funeral ceremony.

DISCOURSE FORTY-SEVENTH.

LOUIS BOURDALOUE.

THE "Reformer of the French Pulpit," as Bourdaloue has been justly called, was born at Bourges, in the year 1632, and at the age of fifteen years entered the Community of the Jesuits, of whose disposition, however, he did not seem to partake. Eighteen years were then passed in study, and in teaching Philosophy and Theology, after which he gave himself wholly to preaching. His bold and original style of eloquence excited universal surprise and admiration; and he was early called to Paris, where, for upward of thirty years, his popularity was undiminished. He departed this life, May 13th, 1704, having continued his labors until within two days of his death.

Bourdaloue seems to have been superior to his creed, though he lived and died in the Catholic Faith. His piety is not called in question; and it has been said of him, "If he won the applause of the great, he hung it as a garland upon the cross of Christ." Most of his sermons exhibit him in the light of a spiritual, warm, and edifying preacher. As already intimated, Bourdaloue did much to improve the current style of preaching, elevating it from the low harangue, and puerile doling out of monkish legends, to the position of dignity and manliness which becomes the minister of Jesus Christ. His sermons are far more argumentative than those of the other great orators of his time. Bossuet addressed the imagination; and Massillon, the heart; but Bourdaloue spoke to the understanding. The discourses of the latter, therefore, are more frigid, and excel in the power to convince by logical argumentation. But though wonderfully condensed, and exact, his subtlest arguments are clothed in diction so beautiful, as to captivate even the unthinking and unwilling. It was his remarkable custom to pronounce his discourses with his eyes partially, if not wholly closed; and yet such was the energy of his mind, and such the pathos of his eloquence, that he roused the affections of his hearers, and penetrated and melted their hearts. The sermons of Bourdaloue which possess the greatest degree of excellence, are those upon the Passion of the Saviour, of which there are several. The best of these, by common consent, is the one here given. As will be seen by the "*Sire*," with which it opens, it was preached before the king.

THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST.

"And there followed Him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented Him. But Jesus turning unto them, said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.'"—LUKE, xxiii. 27, 28.

Sire—is it then true that the passion of Jesus Christ,—of which we celebrate to-day the august but sorrowful mystery, some idea of which faith gives us,—is not the most touching object which can occupy our minds and excite our grief? Is it true that our tears can be more holily and more suitably employed than in weeping over the death of the God-man; and that another duty more pressing and more necessary suspends, so to speak, the obligation which so just a gratitude imposes upon us in another place, to sympathize by sentiments of tenderness in the sufferings of our Divine Redeemer? Never could we have supposed it, Christians; and yet it is Jesus Christ who speaks to us; and who, as the last proof of His love, the most generous and the most disinterested that ever existed, in His way to Calvary, where He must die for us, warns us not to weep at His death, and to weep over every other thing rather than His death. "Weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves." St. Ambrose, delivering the funeral oration of the Emperor Valentine the younger, in the presence of all the people of Milan, thought that he had sufficiently executed his ministry, and had fully answered the expectations of his auditors, when he exhorted them to confess by the tribute of their tears, how much they were indebted to the memory of that incomparable Prince, who had exposed his life, and had, as it were, immolated himself for them. But I, engaged to address you in this discourse on the bloody death of the Saviour of men, I behold myself reduced to the necessity of employing a language widely different; since, instead of borrowing the words of St. Ambrose, which seemed naturally to agree with my subject, I must, on the contrary, say to you—Give not to this dying Redeemer tears which He demands not from you: the tears which you shed are precious tears; do not waste them; they are required for a subject more important than you imagine. Jesus Christ not only refuses to accept of your tears for His death, but He even expressly forbids them; because to weep for it might prevent you from weeping for another evil, which much more nearly affects you, and which indeed is more deplorable than even the death of the Son of God. I know that all creatures are or seem sensible of it; that the sun is eclipsed, that the earth trembles, that the vail of the temple is rent, that the rocks are torn asunder, that the tombs are opened, that the ashes of the dead revive, that all nature is moved at it: man only is for once freed from this duty; provided he acquits himself in a manner less tender in appearance, but more solid in reality. Let us then leave to the heavenly bodies and to the elements, or, if you will associate with them, intelligent creatures, let us leave to the blessed angels the care of honoring the funeral of Jesus Christ by the marks of their sorrow; "these embassadors of peace," says Isaiah, "have wept bitterly." But as for us, upon whom God has other designs, instead of weeping for Jesus Christ, let us weep with Jesus Christ, let us weep like Jesus Christ, let us weep for that which made Jesus Christ weep: thus we shall consecrate our tears, and render them beneficial.

An evil greater in the idea of God than even the death of Christ; an evil more worthy of being deplored than all that the only Son of God has suffered; an evil to which our tears are more legitimately due than to the Passion of the God-man; you are too much enlightened, Christians, not to comprehend at one glance, is sin. There has never been among all created beings any thing but sin which could predominate over the sufferings of Jesus Christ, and justify the words of this Saviour God, when He commands us with as much propriety as affection, "Weep not for Me, but for yourselves." To obey, Christians, this commandment, which our divine Master gives us, and to profit by such important advice, let us consider to-day the mystery of the holy passion, only that we may weep over the devastation of our sins; and let us not weep over the devastation of our sins but in sight of the mystery of the holy passion. Indeed, if Jesus Christ had suffered independently of our sin, His passion, however severe it might be for Him, would have nothing in it so frightful to us; and if our sin had no connection with the sufferings of Christ, exceedingly sinful as it is, it would be less odious to us. It is then by sin that we must measure the inestimable benefit of the Passion of the Son of God; and it is by the inestimable benefit of the Passion of the Son of God that we must measure the enormity of sin: of sin, I say—observe well these three propositions which I advance, and which will divide this discourse—of sin, which was the essential cause of the Passion of Jesus Christ; of sin, which is a continual renewal of the Passion of Jesus Christ; in a word, of sin, which is the annihilation of all the fruits of the Passion of Jesus Christ. In three sentences, the Passion of Jesus Christ caused by sin; the Passion of Jesus Christ renewed by sin; the Passion of Jesus Christ rendered useless and even prejudicial by sin. Behold what it is that claims our tears and demands our attention.

First Part.—Consider the passion of Jesus Christ which was caused by sin. Behold the two circumstances, and, as it were, the two scenes, in which I am going to introduce this Mediator by excellence between God and man. The garden where He agonized, and Calvary where He expired. The garden where He agonized; it is there that I will show Him to you feeling all the bitterness of sin. Calvary, where He expired; it is there that I will cause you to contemplate His person immolated for the satisfaction of sin. Is any thing more requisite to constrain you and me to shed tears, not of a vain and sterile compassion, but of an efficacious and holy compunction? "Weep not for me, but for yourselves." Apply yourselves, my dear hearers, and begin by the interior sorrows of Jesus Christ, to learn what should be the subject of our sorrow.

Scarcely has He entered into the garden where He went to pray, when He falls into a profound grief. "He began to be sorrowful." The feeling is so keen that He can not conceal it: He declares it to His disciples: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Fear seizes Him, "He began to be sore amazed;" troubles overwhelm Him, "He began to be very heavy:" by the force of the conflict in Himself He already suffers a kind of agony beforehand, "He was in an agony;" and by the violence of this combat He even sweats blood: "And His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." "What does all this signify," says St. Chrysostom, "in Him who was strength itself, and the apparent weaknesses of whom could be nothing but so many miracles of His almighty love? What does He fear? What troubles Him? Why that depression in a soul which, besides enjoying the clearest vision of God, was always laden with the pure joys of blessedness? Why that internal war and that commotion of the passions in a mind incapable of being moved by any other springs than those of sovereign reason?" Ah! Christians, behold what we have well weighed in our minds, and what we can not too well understand for our edification. For to say that the Saviour of the world is in an agony only because He is about to die; that the sole ignominy of the cross, or the rigor of the punishment prepared for Him, caused Him these agitations, these disgusts, these mortal fears, would not be to have a sufficiently high idea of the passions of His nature. "No, no, my brethren," resumes St. Chrysostom, "these are not the things about which His great soul was troubled." The cross which Jesus Christ had chosen as the instrument of our redemption did not appear to Him so terrible an object; that cross, which must be the foundation of His glory, became not to Him an object of shame; the cup which His Father had given Him, and which even on this account was so precious to Him, was not that bitter cup of which He testified so much horror, and which produced a sweat of blood from all the pores of His body; these were not precisely the symptoms of the mysterious baptism of His death. For, however bloody this baptism might be, He Himself had ardently desired it, He had sought it with holy eagerness; He had said to His disciples, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?" It was then some other thing than the presence of death which troubled Him, which affrighted Him. And what? I have already told you, my dear hearers; but, Lord, to impress it deeply on the minds and hearts of those who hear me, I want all the zeal with which Thou wast consumed. What do I say? Sin is the only thing opposed to God; the only evil capable of afflicting the God-man, and making this God of glory sorrow itself. Rise, then, Christians, above all human ideas, and conceive yet once this grand truth! Behold the faithful exposition of it drawn from the fathers of the Church, but above all from St. Augustin.

For while the chief priests and Pharisees took counsel together against Jesus Christ, at the palace of Caiaphas, and while they prepared themselves to oppress Him by false accusations and supposititious crimes, Jesus Christ Himself in the garden, humbled and prostrate before His Father, considered Himself at the same time, without the loss of His innocence, laden with real crimes; and according to the oracle of Isaiah, which was verified in the letter, "The Lord laid upon Him the iniquities of us all." Then, in consequence of the transfer which the Lord made of our iniquities to His adorable Son, that just One who had never known sin, found Himself covered with the sins of all nations, with the sins of all ages, with the sins of all states and conditions. Yes, all the sacrileges which should ever be committed, and which His infinite prescience made Him distinctly foresee, all the blasphemies which should be uttered against heaven, all the abominations which should excite blushes from earth, all the scandals which should break out in the world, all those monsters which hell should produce, and of which men should more especially be the authors, came to torture Him in a crowd, and to serve already as His executioners. Where do we learn this? from Himself, the alone witness and judge of whatever He suffers in this cruel agitation. For, according to the interpretation of St. Augustin, it is personally of Jesus Christ that these words of the Psalmist must be understood: "The sorrows of death compassed Me, and the floods of ungodly men made Me afraid." It was, then, in the anticipation of this blessed, yet altogether sorrowful moment, that Jeremiah, as a prophet, had a right to say to Jesus Christ, "For Thy breach is great like the sea." Ah! Lord, Thy sorrow is as a vast sea of which we can not sound the bottom, nor measure the immensity! It was to increase and swell this sea that all the sins of men, as the Scripture expresses it, rushed like so many waves into the soul of the Son of God; for it is also of His passion, and of the excess of His sorrow, that we must explain this passage: "Save me O God, for the waters are come in unto My soul." With this difference, that while the waves entering into the sea are there confounded and lost, so that it is not possible to distinguish them one from the other; here, on the contrary, that is to say, in this abyss of sins and sea of sorrows, with which the Saviour of the world was overwhelmed, He discerned without mixture or confusion all the various sins for which He was about to suffer: the sins of kings and people; the sins of the rich and the poor; the sins of fathers and children; the sins of the priests and the laity. In these torrents of iniquity He distinguishes slanders and calumnies, obscenities and adulteries, simony and usury, treasons and vengeance. With all the keenness of His Divine penetration, He perceives Himself called to answer for the ravings of the proud and ambitious, the excesses of the sensual and voluptuous, the impieties of atheists and libertines, the impostures and malice of hypocrites. Should we be astonished if all this, according to the metaphor of the Holy Spirit, having formed a deluge of waters in His blessed soul, it should be swallowed up by them; and if also, in the grief of His heart, and in the sorrow caused by His zeal for God and His love for us, this deluge of waters should have been followed by a sweat of blood? "And his sweat was as it were great drops of blood."

Behold, Christians, what I call the Passion of Christ, and what formed the first scene of His suffering! Is it thus that we consider sin? And does the sorrow that we feel on account of it produce in us proportionably like effects? Let us now enter into the secrets of our consciences; and, profiting by the model which God proposes to us, let us see if our dispositions, in the exercise of Christian penitence, have at least that just measure which must give it validity. Is it thus, I say, that we consider sin? do we conceive the same horror of it? do we lose tranquillity of soul in it? are we agitated and grieved at it? Is this sin, by the idea which we form of it, a punishment to us as it was to Jesus Christ? Do we, like Jesus Christ, fear it more than all the evils in the world? does it bring us by remorse for it into a kind of agony? Ah! my brethren, cries St. Chrysostom, touched with this comparison, behold the great disorder with which we have to reproach ourselves, and on account of which we must eternally weep over ourselves. A God-man is troubled at the sight of our sin, and we are tranquil; He is afflicted by it, and we are unmoved; He is humbled for it, and we are bold; He sweats even streams of blood, and we shed not one tear; this is what should terrify us. We sin, and far from being sorrowful even unto death, perhaps after the sin do we not still insult the justice and providence of our God, and do we not say within ourselves, like the ungodly, "I have sinned and what evil has happened to me?" Am I less at my ease on account of it? Am I of less consideration in the world? Does it diminish my credit and authority? Hence that false peace so directly opposed to the agony of the Son of God; that peace which we enjoy in the most frightful condition, which is a state of sin. Although the enemies of God, we do not allow ourselves merely to appear satisfied. Not only do we affect to be so, but we are capable of being so in reality, even so as to be able to dissipate ourselves and run into the frivolous joys of the age. Reprobate peace, which can only proceed from the hardness of our hearts. Peace a thousand times more sad than all the other punishments of sin, and in some respects worse than sin itself! Hence that vain confidence so contrary to the holy fear of Jesus Christ; that presumptuous confidence which encourages us where this God-man has trembled; which inspires us with hope where He believed that we ought to fear; which flatters us with a hope of mercy, and which promises to us the exercise of a Divine patience, upon which He never reckoned. A mercy badly understood, a patience weak and chimerical, which would but serve, and which, in fact, by the abuse which we make of it, does but serve to cherish our sin. Hence that hardness of heart, and if I may be allowed to use the term, that effrontery which blushes at nothing, and which appears so monstrous when compared with the confusion of Jesus Christ. While we sin against God, we are not less lofty before men; we support sin with assurance, and far from being confounded at it, we glory in it, we applaud ourselves for it, we are puffed up by it, we triumph on account of it. This is what obliges the Divine Word to humble Himself. The scandalous insolence of certain sinners could not be repaired by any other humiliation than that of Jesus Christ; the blind rashness of so many libertines could not be expiated by any other fears than those of Jesus Christ; the indifference of so many insensible souls required no less remedy than the sensibility of Jesus Christ. That God might be duly satisfied, that sin might at once be as detested as it was detestable, it was needful that a sorrow for it should at once be conceived proportionate to its malice. Only the God-man was capable of this, because He only could know the wickedness of sin perfectly and in all its extent, and consequently He only was able to hate sin. For this purpose He is come, and in the days of His mortal life, as says St. Paul, "Having offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him from death, He has given us the most excellent idea of Christian sorrow." If, then, we still bring to His sacrament lukewarm hearts, cold hearts, barren and hard hearts, doubt not, my brethren, concludes St. Bernard, that it is to us that the Saviour to-day addresses these words, "Weep not for Me, but for yourselves."

Indeed, do you know what will condemn us most in the judgment of God? Our sins will not even be so criminal as our pretended contritions; those languishing contritions, so little conformed to the fervor of Jesus Christ; those superficial contritions with which we know so well how to preserve all the ease of our minds, all the cheerfulness of our hearts, all the relish for pleasures, all the delights and allurements of society; those imaginary contritions which never afflict us, and which, by an infallible consequence, produce no change. If we are influenced by the spirit of faith, one sin is enough to disconcert all the powers of our souls; to throw us into the same consternation as Cain, to produce cries strong as those of Esau, when he saw himself excluded from his birthright and deprived of his father's blessing; to make us groan as that king of Babylon when he perceived the hand that wrote his sentence; we will say more, even, in a word, to make us feel at the bottom of our hearts, agreeably to the language of the apostle, what Jesus Christ felt in Himself: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." But because the habit of sin has by degrees hardened our hearts, that which terrified Jesus Christ alarms us no more; that which excited all his passions touches us no more. O Lord, said David, and we ought to say with him, heal my soul. But entirely to heal my soul, heal it from its feeble and imperfect contritions, which render its wounds yet more incurable instead of closing them. Heal it because at least it is in commotion; heal the breaches thereof, for it shaketh. But it is not enough that it is shaken, it must be converted by the invincible force of the example of Jesus Christ.

Having this model before our eyes, the penitence which we have so often abused will become salutary to us; it will be no more what it has been for us so many times, a pure ceremony; it will be a genuine return, a real change, a true conversion. We have said, and it is true, that sorrow of sin, to be acceptable, must have qualities as rare as they are requisite; that it must be supernatural, absolute, sincere, efficacious, universal; that God must be the principal object of it, and the end; that it must exceed all other sorrow, and that sin being the sovereign evil, we ought to abhor it above every other evil; that there is no possible sin but it must exclude, no temptation but it must have the power to overcome, no occasion but it must induce us to avoid; and that if we fail in one of these qualities, it is only a vain and apparent contrition. But I tell you to-day, that all these qualities together are comprised in the sorrow of Jesus Christ: I tell you that to confirm yourselves in a solid contrition, in a perfect contrition, you have only to form yourselves after the model of Jesus Christ, by applying to yourselves what God said to Moses, "See that thou do according to the pattern." If this is not our rule, let us weep on this account, my dear hearers; and let us weep the more bitterly, that we can not apply it to ourselves. Insensible to our sins, let us at least weep over our insensibility; let us weep because we do not weep, and let us afflict ourselves because we are not afflicted. Thus shall we arrive at true contrition, and thus we shall begin to imitate the suffering of the Saviour.

But besides this inferior passion, if I may so speak, which sin at first caused Him, behold another with which the senses are more struck, and of which sin was not less the unhappy and principal cause. For, from the garden where Jesus Christ prayed, without stopping at present to contemplate the rest, I am going to Calvary where he expired; and contemplate in spirit this author and finisher of our faith, according to the expression of the great Apostle, who, instead of a life tranquil and happy, of which he was capable, dies the most cruel and the most ignominious death. Surprised at so singular an event, I dare venture to inquire of God the reason; I appeal to His wisdom, His justice, and His goodness; and, Christian as I am, I am almost ready, after the example of the infidel Jew, to make a stumbling-block of this mystery of my redemption! And what indeed is it that I see; the most innocent of men treated as the most criminal, and delivered to merciless executioners? But God, jealous of the glory of His attributes, and interested in destroying a scandal so plausible in appearance, but at bottom so injurious as this, knows well how to repress this first movement of my zeal. And how? By making me know that this death is the punishment of my sins, by making me confess that all that is transacted at Calvary, whatever horror I may conceive of it, is justly ordained, wisely managed, and holily and divinely executed. Why? Because by nothing less could sin be punished, and because it is true, as St. Jerome has remarked, that if in the treasures of the wrath of God there were no other chastisements for sin than those which our reason could approve, our reason being bounded, and sin, in its nature, partaking of something infinite, God would never have been fully satisfied.

Our error, Christians (apply yourselves, if you please, to these two thoughts well worthy of your reflections), our error is in now considering the Saviour of the world, by what He is in Himself, and not by what He became for us: that which deceives us in regarding His passion with respect to the Jews, who were only the instruments of it, and never with respect to God, who has been the principal agent, and the sovereign arbiter of it. I will explain myself. Jesus Christ in Himself is the Holy of Holies, the well-beloved of the Father, the object of God's delights, the head of the elect, the source of all blessings, substantial and incarnate holiness. This is the cause on account of which our reason revolts in seeing Him suffer. But we do not observe that at Calvary He ceases, so to speak, to be all this: and instead of those qualities which were for a time obscured and eclipsed, He was reduced to be, according to Scripture, a curse for men, and to be the victim of sin. And, since St. Paul has said it, I will repeat it after him, and in the same sense as he, to be the member of sin, and even sin itself: for "He was made sin for us who knew no sin." Then in this condition, remarks St. Chrysostom, there was no punishment which was not due to Jesus Christ: humiliations, insults, scourges, nails, thorns, cross; all this, in the style of the Apostle, was the wages and deserts of sin; and since the Son of God then represented sin, and had engaged to be treated by His Father as though He were sin itself, it was perfectly in order that he should undergo all that He had to endure. In this sense has He suffered too much? No! His love, says St. Bernard, has been full and abundant, but it has not been prodigal: He calls Himself a man of sorrows; but, replies Tertullian, it is the name which becomes Him, since He is a man of sin. We see Him torn and bruised by blows, but among the number of the blows which He received, and the multitude of the crimes which He expiated, there is but too much proportion; He is abandoned to wicked, barbarous and cruel men, who add to the decree of His death whatever their rage suggests; but although they add to the decree of Pilate, they add nothing to that of God. He is maltreated and insulted; but thus did sin, in substance, merit to be insulted and maltreated. He expires upon the cross; and here sin must be placed. Then, Christians, rectify your sentiments; and while this Divine Lamb is immolated, instead of preoccupying yourselves with the merit of His holiness and virtues, remember that it is for your secret and public disorders that He is sacrificed; that it is for your excesses, for your intemperance, for your shameful attainments and infamous pleasures. If you figure Him to yourselves, such as He is, laden with all our debts, this flagellation to which He is condemned will have nothing more to shock you; those thorns which tear Him will no more wound the delicacy of your piety; those nails with which His hands and feet are pierced will no more excite your indignation. My sin, you will say in yourselves, accusing yourselves, My sin merited all these punishments and since Jesus Christ is clothed with my sin, He must bear them all. Also, it is in this view that the eternal Father, by a conduct as adorable as rigorous, forgetting that He is His Son, and considering Him as His enemy (pardon me all these expressions), declares Himself His persecutor, or rather the chief of persecutors. The Jews converted their hatred into a zeal for religion, to practice whatever cruelty can devise upon His sacred body; but the cruelty of the Jews was not sufficient to punish such a man as this, a man covered with the crimes of all the human race; it was necessary, says St. Ambrose, that God should interfere, and this is what faith sensibly discovers to us.

Yes, Christians, it is God Himself, and not the counsel of the Jews, that delivers Jesus Christ. This just One, my brethren, said St. Peter, has not been delivered as guilty, but by an express order of God, and by a decree of His wisdom: "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," a declaration which he made in their synagogue, without fearing that they would value themselves upon it, or take any advantage of it, to stifle the remorse of the deicide which they had committed. It is true that the Pharisees and the doctors of the law persecuted Jesus Christ to kill Him. But they did not persecute Him, O Lord, said David, by the spirit of prophecy, until Thou hadst smitten Him first. Until then they respected Him; until then, however exasperated they might be, they dared not attempt His person. But from the moment that Thou art turned against Him, and discharging Thy wrath upon Him, hast given them permission, they have thrown themselves upon this innocent prey, reserved for their fury. But by whom reserved, unless by Thee, O my God, who, in their sacrilegious vengeance, found the accomplishment of Thine holy anger? For it was Thyself, O Lord, who justly changed into an incensed God, madest not merely Thy servant Job, but also Thine only Son to feel the weight of Thine arm. Long didst Thou look for this victim. He was needful to repair Thy glory and satisfy Thy justice. Thou didst delight in Him; but seeing none but vile subjects in the world, but guilty offenders, but feeble men, whose actions and sufferings could not merit any thing in Thy sight, Thou didst find Thyself reduced to a kind of impotency to avenging Thyself. Now Thou hast wherewith to do it fully: for behold a victim worthy of Thyself; a victim capable of expiating the sins of a thousand worlds; a victim such as Thou requirest and dost justly deserve. Strike now, Lord! Strike! This victim is disposed to receive Thy blows! And without considering that He is Thy Christ, behold Him but to remember that He is our's; that He is our substitute; and that in immolating Him, Thou wilt satisfy that Divine hatred with which Thou viewest sin!

God does not content Himself with striking Him: He seems to wish to *reject* Him, by forsaking and abandoning Him in the midst of His punishment. This desertion and abandonment of God are in some respect the punishment of the damned, which Jesus Christ suffered for us all, agreeably to the language of Saint Paul. The reprobation of man would have been too trifling a thing to punish sin in all the extent of its malice. It was necessary, if I may be allowed to use the language—but you will discern its meaning, and I do not fear that you will suspect me of understanding it in an improper sense—it was necessary that the sensible reprobation of the God-man should fill up the measure of the malediction and punishment due to sin. O prophet, thou hast said, that thou hast never seen the righteous forsaken, but behold a memorable example which thou canst not deny! Jesus Christ forsaken of His Heavenly Father, and on this account scarcely daring to address Him as Father, only calling Him His God! "My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

Nevertheless, be not offended at this, since after all, there is nothing in this procedure of God which is not according to the rules of equity. No, concludes St. Augustin, there never was a death at once more just and more unjust, than that of the Redeemer; more unjust with respect to the men who were the executors of it, more just with respect to Him who has endured the sentence of it. Consider, my dear hearers (this is the reflection of the Abbé Rupert, with which you will perhaps be surprised, but which is a certain truth in theology), consider that this day is singularly and sovereignly the day predicted by the oracles of all the Scriptures, as the day of the Lord's vengeance. For it is not in the last judgment that our offended and indignant God will satisfy Himself as a God. It is not in hell that He will declare Himself more formally the God of vengeance; it is on Calvary. It is there that His vindictive justice acts freely and without restraint, not being checked, as it is elsewhere, by the littleness of the subject against which it is exercised. All that the damned shall suffer is only a half vengeance to Him. Those gnashings of teeth, those groans and those tears, those fires which shall never be extinguished, all this is nothing, or almost nothing, when compared with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in His death.

Behold, my dear hearers, what sin costs a God! But what has it cost us up to the present moment? And in view of the fearful contrast which we find between Him and us, between Him, all holy as He is, and ourselves, all guilty as we are, has He not a right to say to us, "Weep not for Me, but for yourselves!" For, is it not the most deplorable subversion to see the guilty spared, while the righteous endures punishment, and so severe a punishment? sinners preserved and indulged, while the innocent is sacrificed? sin even in honor and ease, while, if I may thus speak, the *resemblance* of sin is in ignominy and torments? Yet, ye men of the world, ye men of ease and sensuality, this is the sorrowful parallel which here presents itself to your eyes, and which must cover you with confusion! This Lamb without spot dies! this Lamb, who is made the victim of sin *for us!* And how does He die? Mangled and bloody, crowned with thorns and fastened to a cross! And you, worthy of all the plagues and chastisements of Heaven, how do you live? Tranquil, and seeking all the conveniences, enjoying all the ease, tasting all the sweets of your condition! Ah! Lord, since sin, that monster which hell has created against Thee, has caused Thee death, and the death of the cross, it would be enough for grateful hearts to conceive against it all the hatred of which they are capable! But Thou hast commanded us not to weep for Thee, but rather to shed tears over ourselves. And since sin causes death to us, not a natural and temporal death like Thine, but a spiritual, an eternal death, should we not employ ourselves in its destruction? And yet, instead of laboring to destroy it in ourselves, we entertain it, we cherish it, we suffer it to control us. Is there any penitence in Christianity, or if there is, what is the penitence of Christians, and in what does it consist! Is it a penitence which chastises the body, a penitence which mortifies the senses, a penitence which crucifies the flesh? You know it is, my dear hearers; and what must more sensibly touch you, is to see the passion of Jesus Christ, not merely caused by sin, but *renewed* by sin, as I am going to show you in the second part.

SECOND PART.—The Passion of Jesus Christ, however sorrowful and ignominious it may appear to us, must nevertheless have been to Jesus Christ Himself an object of delight, since this God-man, by a wonderful secret of His wisdom and love, has willed that the mystery of it shall be continued and solemnly renewed in His Church until the final consummation of the world. For what is the Eucharist but a perpetual repetition of the Saviour's Passion, and what has the Saviour supposed in instituting it, but that whatever passed at Calvary is not only represented but consummated on our altars? That is to say, that He is still performing the functions of the victim anew, and is every moment *virtually* sacrificed, as though it were not sufficient that He should have suffered once. At least that His love, as powerful as it is free, has given to His adorable sufferings that character of perpetuity which they have in the sacrament, and which renders them so salutary to us. Behold, Christians, what the love of a God has devised; but behold, also, what has happened through the malice of men! At the same time that Jesus Christ, in the sacrament of His body, repeats His holy passion in a manner altogether mysterious, men, the false imitators, or rather base corrupters of the works of God, have found means to renew this same passion, not only in a profane, but criminal, sacrilegious, and horrible manner!

Do not imagine that I speak figuratively. Would to God, Christians, that what I am going to say to you were only a figure, and that you were justified in vindicating yourselves to-day against the horrible expressions which I am obliged to employ! I speak in the literal sense; and you ought to be more affected with this discourse, if what I advance appears to you to be overcharged; for it is by your excesses that it is so, and not by my words! Yes, my dear hearers, the sinners of the age, by the disorders of their lives, renew the bloody and tragic Passion of the Son of God in the world; I will venture to say that the sinners of the age, cause to the Son of God, even in the state of glory, as many new passions as they have committed outrages against Him by their actions! Apply yourselves to form an idea of them; and in this picture, which will surprise you, recognize what you are, that you may weep bitterly over yourselves! What do we see in the Passion of Jesus Christ? A Divine Saviour betrayed and abandoned by cowardly disciples, persecuted by pontiffs and hypocritical priests, ridiculed and mocked in the palace of Herod by impious courtiers, placed upon a level with Barabbas, and to whom Barabbas is preferred by a blind and inconstant people, exposed to the insults of libertinism, and treated as a mock-king by a troop of soldiers equally barbarous and insolent; in fine, crucified by merciless executioners! Behold, in a few words, what is most humiliating and most cruel in the death of the Saviour of the world. Then tell me if this is not precisely what we now see, of what we are every day called to be witnesses. Let us resume; and follow me.

Betrayed and abandoned by cowardly disciples: such, O divine Saviour, has been thy destiny. But it was not enough that the apostles, the first men whom Thou didst choose for Thine own, in violation of the most holy engagement, should have forsaken Thee in the last scene of Thy life: that one of them should have sold Thee, another renounced Thee, and all disgraced themselves by a flight which was perhaps the most sensible of all the wounds that Thou didst feel in dying. This wound must be again opened by a thousand acts of infidelity yet more scandalous. Even in the Christian ages we must see men bearing the character of Thy disciples, and not having the resolution to sustain it; Christians, prevaricators and deserters from their faith; Christians ashamed of declaring themselves for Thee, not daring to appear what they are, renouncing at least in the exterior what they have professed, flying when they ought to fight; in a word, Christians in form, ready to follow Thee even to the Supper when in prosperity, and while it required no sacrifice, but resolved to abandon Thee in the moment of temptation. It is on your account, and my own, my dear hearers, that I speak, and behold what ought to be the subject of our sorrow.

A Saviour mortally persecuted by pontiffs and hypocritical priests. Let us not enter, Christians, into the discussion of this article, at which your piety would perhaps be offended, and which would weaken or prejudice the respect which you owe to the ministers of the Lord. It belongs to us, my brethren, to meditate to-day on this fact in the spirit of holy compunction; to us consecrated to the ministry of the altars, to us priests of Jesus Christ, whom God has chosen in His Church to be the dispensers of His sacraments. It does not become me to remonstrate in this place. God forbid that I should undertake to judge those who sustain the sacred office! This is not the duty of humility to which my condition calls me! Above all, speaking as I do, before many ministers, the irreprehensible life of whom contributes so much to the edification of the people, I am not yet so infatuated as to make myself the judge, much less the censor of their conduct. But though it should induce you only to acknowledge the favors with which God prevents you, as a contrast, from the frightful blindness into which He permits others to fall; remember that the priests, and the princes of the priests, are those whom the Evangelist describes as the authors of the conspiracy formed against the Saviour of the world, and of the wickedness committed against Him. Remember that this scandal is notoriously public, and renewed still every day in Christianity. Remember, but with fear and horror, that the greatest persecutors of Jesus Christ are not lay libertines, but wicked priests; and that among the wicked priests, those whose corruption and iniquity are covered with the vail of hypocrisy, are His most dangerous and most cruel enemies! A hatred, disguised under the name of zeal, and covered with the specious pretext of observance of the law, was the first movement of the persecution which the Pharisees and the priests raised against the Son of God! Let us fear lest the same passion should blind us! Wretched passion, exclaims St. Bernard, which spreads the venom of its malignity even over the most lovely of the children of men, and which could not see a God upon earth without hating Him! A hatred not only of the prosperity and happiness, but what is yet more strange, of the merit and perfection of others! A cowardly and shameful passion; which, not content with having caused the death of Jesus Christ, continues to persecute Him by rending His mystical body, which is the Church; dividing His members, which are believers; and stifling in their hearts that charity which is the spirit of Christianity! Behold, my brethren, the subtle temptation against which we have to defend ourselves, and under which it is but too common for us to fall!

A Redeemer reviled and mocked in the palace of Herod by the impious creatures of his court. This was, without doubt, one of the most sensible insults which Jesus Christ received. But do not suppose, Christians, that this act of impiety ended there. It has passed from the court of Herod, from that prince destitute of religion, into those even of Christian princes. And is not the Saviour still a subject of ridicule to the libertine spirits which compose them? They worship Him externally, but internally how do they regard His maxims? What idea have they of His humility, of His poverty, of His sufferings? Is not virtue either unknown or despised? It is not a rash zeal which induces me to speak in this manner; it is what you too often witness, Christians; it is what you perhaps feel in yourselves; and a little reflection upon the manners of the court, will convince you that there is nothing that I say which is not confirmed by a thousand examples; and that you yourselves are sometimes unhappy accomplices in these crimes. Herod had often earnestly wished to see Jesus Christ. The reputation which so many miracles had given Him excited the curiosity of this prince, and he did not doubt but that a man who commanded all nature, might strike some wonderful blow to escape from the persecution of His enemies. But the Son of God, who had not been sparing of His prodigies for the salvation of others, spared them for Himself, and would not say a single word about His own safety. He considered Herod and his people as profane persons, with whom He thought it improper to hold any intercourse, and He preferred rather to pass for a fool, than to satisfy the false wisdom of the world. As His kingdom was not of this world, as He said to Pilate, it was not at the court that He designed to establish Himself. He knew too well that His doctrine could not be relished in a place where the rules of worldly wisdom only were followed, and where all the miracles which He had performed, had not been sufficient to gain men full of love for themselves, and intoxicated with their greatness. In this corrupted region they breathe only the air of vanity; they esteem only that which is splendid they speak only of preferment: and on whatever side we cast our eyes, we see nothing but what either flatters or inflames the ambitious desires of the heart of man.

What probability then was there that Jesus Christ, the most humble of all men, should obtain an hearing where only pageantry and pride prevail? If He had been surrounded with honors and riches, He would have found partisans near Herod, and in every other place. But as He preached a renunciation of the world both to His disciples and to Himself, let us not be astonished that they treated Him with so much disdain. Such is the prediction of the holy man Job, and which after Him must be accomplished in the person of all the righteous; "the upright man is laughed to scorn." In fact, my dear hearers, you know that, whatever virtue and merit we may possess, they are not enough to procure us esteem at court. Enter it, and appear only like Jesus Christ clothed with the robe of innocence. Only walk with Jesus Christ in the way of simplicity; only speak as Jesus Christ to render testimony to the truth; and you will find that you meet with no better treatment there than Jesus Christ. To be well received there, you must have pomp and splendor. To keep your station there, you must have artifice and intrigue. To be favorably heard there, you must have complaisance and flattery. Then all this is opposed to Jesus Christ; and the court being what it is, that is to say, the kingdom of the prince of this world, it is not surprising that the kingdom of Jesus Christ can not be established there. But woe to you, princes of the earth. Woe to you, men of the world, who despise this incarnate wisdom; for you shall be despised in your turn; and the contempt which shall fall upon you, shall be much more terrible than the contempt which you manifest can be prejudicial.

A Saviour placed upon a level with Barabbas, and to whom Barabbas is preferred by a blind and fickle rabble. How often have we been guilty of the same outrage against Jesus Christ, as the blind and fickle Jews! How often, after having received Him in triumph in the sacrament of the communion, seduced by cupidity, have we not preferred either a pleasure or interest after which we sought, in violation of His law, to this God of glory! How often, divided between conscience which governed us, and passion which corrupted us, have we not renewed this abominable judgment, this unworthy preference of the creature even above our God! Christians, observe this application; it is that of St. Chrysostom, and if you properly understand it, you must be affected by it. Conscience, which in spite of ourselves, presides in us as judge, said inwardly to us, "What art thou going to do? behold thy pleasure on the one hand, and thy God on the other: for which of the two dost thou declare thyself? for thou canst not save both; thou must either lose thy pleasure or thy God; and it is for thee to decide." And the passion, which by a monstrous infidelity, had acquired the influence over our hearts, made us conclude—I will keep my pleasure. "But what then will become of thy God," replied conscience secretly, "and what must I do; I, who can not prevent myself from maintaining his interests against thee?" I care not what will become of my God, answered passion insolently; I will satisfy myself, and the resolution is taken. "But dost thou know," proceeded conscience by its remorse, "that in indulging thyself in this pleasure it will at last submit thy Saviour to death and crucifixion for thee?" It is of no consequence if He be crucified, provided I can have my enjoyments. "But what evil has He done, and what reason hast thou to abandon Him in this manner?" My pleasure is my reason; and since Christ is the enemy of my pleasure, and my pleasure crucifies Him, I say it again, let Him be crucified.

Behold, my dear hearers, what passes every day in the consciences of men, and what passes in you and in me, every time that we fall into sin, which causes death to Jesus Christ, as well as to our souls! Behold what makes the enormity and wickedness of this sin! I know that we do not always speak, that we do not always explain ourselves in such express terms and in so perceptible a manner; but after all, without explaining ourselves so distinctly and so sensibly, there is a language of the heart which says all this. For, from the moment that I know that this pleasure is criminal and forbidden of God, I know that it is impossible for me to desire it, impossible to seek it, without losing God; and consequently I prefer this pleasure to God in the desire that I form of it, and in the pursuit that I make after it. This, then, is sufficient to justify the thought of St. Chrysostom, and the doctrine of the theologians upon the nature of deadly sin.

A Saviour exposed to insults, and treated as a mock-king by a troop of feigned worshipers. What a spectacle, Christians! Jesus Christ, the eternal Word, covered with a pitiful, purple robe, a reed in His hand, a crown of thorns upon His head, delivered to an insolent soldiery, who, according to the expression of Clement Alexandrine, made a theatrical king of Him whom the angels adore with trembling! They bowed the knee before Him, and, with the most cutting derision, they snatched from Him the reed which He held, to strike Him on the head. An act too much resembling the impieties which are every day committed, during the celebration of our most august mysteries! Were He to appear in all His Majesty, such as He will display at His second coming, you would be seized with fear. But, says St. Bernard, the more He is little, the more worthy is He of our respects; since it is His love, and not necessity, which reduces Him to His state of abasement. But it appears that you take pleasure in destroying His work, by opposing your malice to His goodness. You insult Him, even on the throne of His grace; and, to use the words of the Apostle, you do not fear to trample under foot the blood of the New Testament! For, indeed, what else do you do by so many acts of irreverence, and so many scandals which equally dishonor the sanctuary which you enter, and the God which it contains?

Ah, my brethren, I might well ask the greater part of the Christians of the present day, what St. Bernard asked them in his time: What do you think of your God, and what idea have you conceived of Him? If He occupied the rank which He ought to occupy in your minds, would you proceed to such extremes in His presence? Would you go to His feet to insult Him? for I call it insulting Jesus Christ to come before the altars to unbend ourselves, to amuse ourselves, to speak, to converse, to trouble the sacred mysteries by immodest smiles and laughter. I call it insulting the majesty of Jesus Christ, to remain in His presence in indecent postures, and with as little decorum as in a public place. I call it insulting the humility of Jesus Christ to make an ostentatious display before His eyes, of all the luxury and all the vanities of the world.

I call it insulting the holiness of Jesus Christ to bring near His tabernacle, and into His holy house, a shameful passion which we entertain and kindle afresh there, by bold looks, by sensual desires, by the most dissolute discourses, and sometimes by the most sacrilegious abominations. God formerly complained of the infidelity of His people, addressing them by the mouth of His prophet—"thou hast profaned My holy name." But it is not only His name that we profane, it is His body; it is His blood; it is His infinite merits; it is even His divinity; it is all that He possesses that is venerable and great. Nevertheless, do not deceive yourselves; for the Lord will have a day of reckoning; and, justly incensed at so many injuries, He will not allow you to escape with impunity; but He will know how to avenge Himself by covering you with eternal confusion!

In fine, Christians, a Saviour crucified by merciless executioners, the last effect of the cruelty of men upon the innocent person of the Son of God. It was at the foot of that cross, where we see Him suspended, that the justice of the Father waited for Him during four thousand years. Thus He regarded it, however frightful it might seem, as an object of delight; because He there found the reparation of the divine glory, and the punishment of our offenses. But in proportion as this first cross had charms for Him, in that same proportion does He feel horror at that which our sins prepare for Him every day. It is not, said St. Augustin, the rigor of *that* of which He complains, but the cruelty and the weight of *this* appear to Him insupportable! He knew that His cross, ignominious as it was, would be transferred from Calvary, as speaks St. Augustin, to the heads of the emperors. He foresaw that His death would be the salvation of the world; and that His Father would one day render His ignominy so glorious, that it would become the hope and the happiness of all nations. But in this *other* cross, where we asten Him ourselves by sin, what is there, and what can there be to console him? Nothing but His love despised! His favors rejected, unworthy creatures preferred to the Creator!

If then the sun concealed himself that he might not give his light to the barbarous action of his enemies who crucified him; sinner, what darkness ought not to cover from view thy wanderings and thy excesses? For it is by these—understand it yet once more, if you have not sufficiently understood it—it is by these, my dear hearers, that you incessantly renew all the Passion of Jesus Christ! It is not I who say it, it is St. Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "They crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame." As if this great Apostle would explain himself thus. Do not think, my brethren, that they were the Jews only who imbrued their hands in the blood of the Saviour. Ye are accomplices in this deicide. And by what means? By your impieties; your sacrileges; your obscenities; your jealousies; your resentments; your antipathies; your revenge, and whatever corrupts your heart and excites it to revolt against God! Is it not then just, that while you weep over Jesus Christ, you should yet weep more over yourselves? since ye are not only the authors of His death, but your sins destroy all the merit of it, as it respects yourselves, and render it useless and even prejudicial to you; as it remains for me to prove in the third part.

THIRD PART.—That there are men and Christian men, to whom, by a secret judgment of God, the Passion of Jesus Christ, salutary as it is, may become useless, is a truth too essential in our religion to be unknown, and too sorrowful not to be the subject of our grief. When the Saviour from the height of His cross, ready to give up His Spirit, raised this cry toward heaven, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me!" there was no one who did not suppose but that the violence of His torments forced from Him this complaint, and perhaps we ourselves yet believe it. But the great Bishop Arnauld de Chartres, penetrating deeper into the thoughts and affections of this dying Saviour, says, with much more reason, that the complaint of Jesus Christ to His Father, proceeded from the sentiment with which He was affected, in representing to Himself the little fruit which His death would produce; in considering the small number of the elect who would profit by it; in foreseeing with horror, the infinite number of the reprobate, for whom it would be useless: as if He had wished to proclaim that His merits were not fully enough, nor worthily enough remunerated; and that after having done so much work, He had a right to promise to Himself a different success in behalf of men. The words of this author are admirable: Jesus Christ complains, says this learned prelate, but of what does He complain? That the wickedness of sinners makes Him lose what ought to be the reward of the conflicts which He has maintained. That millions of the human race for whom He suffers will nevertheless be excluded from the benefit of redemption. And because He regards Himself in them as their Head, and themselves, in spite of their worthlessness, as the members of His mystical body; seeing them abandoned by God, He complains of being abandoned Himself; "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" He complains of what made St. Paul groan; when, transported with an apostolic zeal, he said to the Galatians, "What, my brethren, is Jesus Christ then dead in vain? Is the mystery of the cross then nothing to you? Will not this blood which He has so abundantly shed have the virtue to sanctify you?"

But here, Christians, I feel myself affected with a thought which, contrary as it appears to that of the Apostle, only serves to strengthen and confirm it. For it appears that St. Paul is grieved because Jesus Christ has suffered in vain; but I, I should almost console myself if He had only suffered in vain, and if His passion was only rendered useless to us. That which fills me with consternation is, that at the same time that we render it useless to ourselves, by an inevitable necessity it must become pernicious: for this passion, says St. Gregory of Nazianzen, "partakes of the nature of those remedies which kill if they do not heal, and of which the effect is either to give life, or to convert itself into poison: lose nothing of this, I beseech you." Remember then, Christians, what happened during the judgment, and at the moment of the condemnation of the Son of God.

When Pilate washed his hands before the Jews, and declared to them that there was nothing worthy of death in this righteous Man, but that the crime from which he freed himself rested upon them, and that they would have to answer for it, they all cried with one voice, that they consented to it, and that they readily agreed that the blood of this just Man should fall upon them and upon their children. You know what this cry has cost them. You know the curses which one such imprecation has drawn upon them, the anger of heaven which began from that time to burst upon this nation, the ruin of Jerusalem which followed soon after—the carnage of their citizens, the profanation of their temple, the destruction of their republic, the visible character of their reprobation which their unhappy posterity bear to this day, that universal banishment, that exile of sixteen hundred years, that slavery through all the earth—and all in consequence of the authentic prediction which Jesus Christ made to them of it when going to Calvary, and with circumstances which incontestably prove that a punishment as exemplary as this, can not be imputed but to the deicide which they had committed in the person of the Saviour; since it is evident, says St. Augustine, that the Jews were never further from idolatry, nor more religious observers of their law than they were then, and that, excepting the crime of the death of Jesus Christ, God, very far from punishing them, would, it seems, rather have loaded them with His blessings. You know all this, I say; and all this is a convincing proof that the blood of this God-man is virtually fallen upon these sacrilegious men, and that God, in condemning them by their own mouth, although in spite of Himself, employs that to destroy them which was designed for their salvation.

But, Christians, to speak with the Holy Spirit, this has happened to the Jews only as a figure; it is only the shadow of the fearful curses of which the abuse of the merits and passion of the Son of God must be to us the source and the measure. I will explain myself. What do we, my dear hearers, when borne away by the immoderate desires of our hearts to a sin against which our consciences protest? And what do we, when, possessed of the spirit of the world, we resist a grace which solicits us, which presses us to obey God? Without thinking upon it, and without wishing it, we secretly pronounce the same sentence of death which the Jews pronounced against themselves before Pilate, when they said to him "His blood be upon us." For this grace which we despise, is the price of the blood of Jesus Christ; and the sin that we commit is an actual profanation of this very blood. It is, then, as if we were to say to God—"Lord, I clearly see what engagement I make, and I know what risk I run, but rather than not satisfy my own desires, I consent that the blood of Thy Son shall fall upon me. This will be to bear the chastisement of it; but I will indulge my passion; Thou hast a right to draw forth from it a just indignation, but nevertheless I will complete my undertaking."

Thus we condemn ourselves. And here, Christians, is one of the essential foundations of this terrible mystery of the eternity of the punishments with which faith threatens us, and against which our reason revolts. We suppose that we can not have any knowledge of it in this life, and we are not aware, says St. Chrysostom, that we find it completely in the blood of the Saviour, or rather in our profanation of it every day. For this blood, my brethren, adds this holy doctor, is enough to make eternity, not less frightful, but less incredible. And behold the reason, This blood is of an infinite dignity; it can therefore be avenged only by an infinite punishment. This blood, if we destroy ourselves, will cry eternally against us at the tribunal of God. It will eternally excite the wrath of God against us. This blood, falling upon lost souls, will fix a stain upon them, which shall never be effaced. Their torments must consequently never end. A reprobate in hell will always appear in the eyes of God stained with that blood which he has so basely treated. God will then always abhor him; and, as the aversion of God from His creature is that which makes hell, it must be inferred that hell will be eternal. And in this, O my God, Thou art sovereignly just, sovereignly holy, and worthy of our praise and adoration. It is in this way that the beloved disciple declared it even to God Himself in the Apocalypse. Men, said he, have shed the blood of Thy servants and of Thy prophets; therefore they deserve to drink it, and to drink it from the cup of Thine indignation. "For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink." An expression which the Scripture employs to describe the extreme infliction of Divine vengeance. Ah! if the blood of the *prophets* has drawn down the scourge of God upon men, what may we not expect from the blood of JESUS CHRIST? If the blood of *martyrs* is heard crying out in heaven against the persecutors of the faith, how much more will the blood of the REDEEMER be heard!

Then once more, Christians, behold the deplorable necessity to which we are reduced. This blood which flows from Calvary either demands grace for us, or justice against us. When we apply ourselves to it by a lively faith, and a sincere repentance, it demands grace; but when by our disorders and impieties, we check its salutary virtue, it demands justice, and it infallibly obtains it. It is in this blood, says St. Bernard, that all righteous souls are purified; but by a prodigy exactly opposite, it is also in this same blood that all the sinners of the land defile themselves, and render themselves, if I may use the expression, more hideous in the sight of God.

Ah! my God, shall I eternally appear in Thine eyes polluted with that blood which washes away the crimes of others? If I had simply to bear my own sins, I might promise myself a punishment less rigorous, considering my sins as my misfortune, my weakness, my ignorance. Then, perhaps, thou wouldest be less offended on account of them. But when these sins with which I shall be covered, shall present themselves before me as so many sacrileges with respect to the blood of Thy Son; when the abuse of this blood shall be mixed and confounded with all the disorders of my life; when there shall not be one of them against which this blood shall not cry louder than the blood of Abel against Cain; then, O God of my soul! what will become of me in Thy presence? No, Lord, cries the same St. Bernard, affectionately, suffer not the blood of my Saviour to fall upon me in this manner. Let it fall upon me to sanctify, but let it not fall upon me to destroy! Let it fall upon me in a right use of the favors which are the Divine overflowings of it, and not through the blindness of mind and hardness of heart, which are the most terrible punishments of it. Let it fall upon me by the participation of the sacred Eucharist, which is the precious source of it, and not by the maledictions attached to the despisers of Thy sacraments! In fine, let it fall upon me by influencing my conduct and inducing the practice of good works, and let it not fall upon me for my wanderings, my infidelities, my obstinacy, and my impenitence! This, my brethren, is what we ought to ask to-day from Jesus Christ crucified. It is with these views that we ought to go to the foot of His cross and catch the blood as it flows. He was the Saviour of the Jews as well as of us; but this Saviour, says St. Augustin, the Jews have converted into their judge. Avert from us such an evil! May He who died to save us be our Saviour! May He be our Saviour during all the days of our lives! And may His merits, shed upon us abundantly, lose none of their efficacy in our hands, but be preserved entire by the fruit we produce from them! May He be our Saviour in death! And at the last moment, may the cross be our support, and thus may He consummate the work of our salvation which He has begun! May He be our Saviour in a blessed eternity, where we shall be as much sharers in His glory as we have been in His sufferings!

DISCOURSE FORTY-EIGHTH.

ESPRIT FLECHIER.

FLECHIER was born in the year 1632, at Pernes, a small village near Avignon, and died at Montpellier in 1710. His studies were completed at the early age of fifteen, when he became teacher of *Belles lettres*, where he had been educated. His first ecclesiastical charge was the Bishopric of Nismes, to which he was appointed by Louis XIV., who, at the time of the appointment, expressed his regret at being deprived of hearing him longer at Paris. Though a strict Catholic, Flechier seems to have possessed a kind and lovely disposition, and a generosity worthy of imitation. In eloquence he almost divides the supremacy with Bossuet. The latter has been compared to Demosthenes, the former, to Isocrates. Bossuet had more of comprehensive grasp, vehement energy, spontaneous beauty, and overwhelming grandeur; but Flechier excelled him in neatness, softness, regularity, and harmony of language. La Harpe gives as his most striking qualities, spirit, elegance, purity, justness, and delicacy of ideas, and an ornamented, flowery, harmonious diction. Flechier's reputation rests mainly upon his funeral orations, which place him among the first pulpit orators. His best is that which follows, on the death of Marshal Turenne. In delivering it, his fervid eloquence held the congregation breathless; and when he came to the passage, "I am troubled—Turenne is dying," etc., it is said that they burst forth in sobs and tears, as if themselves were present at the mournful spectacle.

FUNERAL ORATION FOR HENRI DE LA TOUR-D'AUVERGNE,*

VISCOUNT TURENNE, MARSHAL GENERAL OF THE ARMY, ETC.

"All the people of Israel greatly bewailed him. They wept many days, and said, Why is that great man dead, who saved the people of Israel?"—1 MAC. c. 9.

I can not, messieurs, at the outset, give you a higher idea of the mournful subject with which I am about to occupy your attention, than by citing the noble and expressive terms used by the Scriptures to praise the life and deplore the death of the sage and valiant Maccabeus—the man who spread the glory of his nation to the ends of the earth; who covered his camp with a buckler, and forced that of the enemy with the sword; who subdued the kings leagued against him, and rejoiced Jacob with those virtues and exploits, the memory of which shall endure forever. This man, who defended the cities of Judah, who subdued the pride of the children of Ammon, and returned loaded with the spoils of Samaria, after having burned upon their own altars the gods of foreign nations; this man, whom God had thrown around Israel like a wall of iron, against which all the forces of Asia had so frequently dashed themselves to pieces; who defeated numerous armies, disconcerted the proudest and most accomplished generals of the King of Syria, came annually like the least of the Israelites, to repair, with his own triumphant hands, the ruins of the sanctuary, and desired no other recompense for the services he had rendered his country, than the honor of having served it. This valiant man, while driving before him, with invincible courage, the enemies whom he had reduced to a shameful flight, at last received a mortal wound, and remained buried, as it were, in his own triumph. At the first report of this disaster, all the cites of Judah were moved, and floods of tears ran from the eyes of all the inhabitants. For a time they were confounded, dumb, and motionless. At length breaking the long and mournful silence, in a voice interrupted by sobs, they gave utterance to the grief, the pity and fear which oppressed their hearts, and exclaimed: "Why is that great man dead, who saved the people of Israel!" At this cry, Jerusalem redoubled its weeping; the arches of the temple trembled; Jordan was troubled, and all its banks re-echoed the sound of those mournful words: "Why is that great man dead, who saved the people of Israel!"

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* Pronounced at Paris, in the Church of St. Eustache, January 10th, 1676.

Christians, whom a mournful ceremony has assembled in this place, do you not call to mind what you saw and felt five months ago?"* Do you not recognize yourselves in the affliction which I have described, and in your minds substitute, for the hero spoken of in Scripture, him of whom I propose to speak? The virtues and fate of the one resemble those of the other, and to the latter nothing is wanting to-day but a eulogy worthy of him. Oh, if the Spirit divine, Spirit of power and truth, should enrich my discourse with those natural and vivid images which represent virtue, and, at the same time, persuade to its practice, with what lofty conceptions shall

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* This oration was delivered five months after the death of Turenne.

I fill your minds, and what noble impressions communicate to your hearts, by the recital of so many edifying and glorious actions!

What subject was ever better fitted to receive all the ornaments of a grave and solid eloquence than the life and death of the high and mighty Prince Henry de la Tour d'Auvergne, Viscount Turenne, Marshal-general of the Camps and Armies of the King, and Colonel general of the Light Cavalry? Where shine, with such luster, the glorious results of military virtue, the conduct of armies, sieges of castles, storming of cities, passages of rivers, bold attacks, honorable retreats, well-ordered encampments, vigorous combats, battles gained, enemies vanquished, scattered by force and address, or worn out and consumed by a sage and lofty prudence? Where can be found such numerous and striking examples, than in the actions of a man wise, modest, liberal, disinterested, devoted to the service of his king and country, great in adversity, by his fortitude, in prosperity by his moderation, in difficulties by his prudence, in danger by his valor, in religion by his piety?

What can inspire sentiments more just and affecting than a death so sudden and surprising; a death which suspended the course of our victories, and dissipated the fondest hopes of peace? Powerful enemies of France, ye live, and the spirit of Christian charity forbids me to cherish a wish for your death. Only may ye recognize the justice of our arms, accept the peace which, in spite of your losses, ye have so often refused, and in the abundance of your tears, extinguish the fires of a war which ye have unfortunately kindled. God forbid that I should extend my wishes further. Inscrutable are the judgments of God! You live; and it is mine, in this pulpit, to mourn a sage and virtuous General, whose intentions were pure, and whose virtue seemed to merit a longer life, a more extended career.

But let us suppress our complaints; it is time to commence his eulogy, and to show how that powerful man triumphed over the enemies of the state by his bravery, over the passions of his soul by his virtue, over the errors and vanities of the world by his piety. If I interrupt the order of my discourse, pardon a little confusion in a subject which has caused us so much grief. I may sometimes confound the General of the army with the sage and the Christian. I shall praise now his victories, and now the virtues which gained them. If I can not rehearse all his actions, I shall discover them in their principles; I shall adore the God of armies, invoke the God of peace, bless the God of mercy, and through the whole win your attention, not by the force of eloquence, but by the reality and greatness of the virtues about which I am engaged to speak.

Do not suppose, messieurs, that I shall follow the custom of orators, and praise M. de Turenne as ordinary men are praised. If his life had less of glory, I should dwell upon the grandeur and nobility of his House; and if his portrait were less beautiful, would discover those of his ancestors. But the glory of his actions effaces that of his birth, and the smallest praise that can be given him is, that he sprang from the ancient and illustrious house of Tour d'Auvergne, which has mingled its blood with that of kings and emperors, given rulers to Aquitaine, princes to all the courts of Europe, and queens even to that of France.

Before his fourteenth year he began to carry arms. Sieges and battles were the exercises of his youth, and his first amusements were victories. Under the discipline of his maternal uncle, the Prince of Orange, he learned the art of war, in the quality of a simple soldier, and neither pride nor indolence restrained him from one of his employments which required labor and obedience. He was seen in this last rank of military service, neither refusing any labor, nor dreading any peril; doing from a sense of honor what others did from necessity, and distinguished from them only by a greater attachment to fatigue, and a nobler application to all his duties.

Then commenced a life whose career was yet to become so glorious, like those rivers which deepen and expand the further they extend from their source, and which carry wealth and prosperity to all the regions through which they flow. From that time, he lived only for the glory and welfare of his country. He performed all the services which could be expected from a mind firm and active, lodged in a robust and healthy frame. In his youth he had all the prudence of mature age. His days were full, to use the language of Scripture; and as he did not lose his early years in luxury and pleasure, he was not compelled to spend his last in weakness and inactivity.

What enemy of France has not felt the effects of his valor, and what part of our frontier has not served as the theater of his glory? He crosses the Alps, and in the famous actions of Casal, of Turin, and of the rout of Quiers, he signalizes himself by his courage and prudence. Italy regards him as one of the principal instruments of those great and prodigious successes which posterity will scarcely credit. He passes from the Alps to the Pyrennees, to aid in the conquest of two important places, which puts one of our finest provinces under protection from all the efforts of Spain. He goes to collect, beyond the Rhine, the remnants of a defeated army; he takes cities, and assists in gaining battles. Thus by degrees, and by his own merit, he rises to supreme command, and shows, during the whole course of his life, what can be done for the defense of a kingdom by a General who is rendered worthy to command by obeying, and who joins to courage and genius application and experience.

Then it was that his mind and heart displayed all their energies. Whether called to arrange matters, or bring them to an issue; to pursue victory with ardor, or wait for it with patience; whether to counteract the designs of the enemy by bravery, or dissipate the fears and jealousies of his allies by wisdom; whether to control himself amid the successes, or sustain himself amid the reverses, of war, his soul was always equal to the occasion. He had only to change virtues when fortune changed her face; elated without pride, depressed without meanness, almost equally admirable when, with judgment and boldness, he saved the remains of his troops beaten at Mariandel, as when he himself beat the Imperials and the Bavarians; or when, with triumphant troops, he forced all Germany to ask peace from France.*

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Let us follow this prince in his last campaigns, during which so many difficult enterprises, so many glorious successes are to be regarded as proofs of his courage, and rewards of his piety. To commence his marches with prayer, to repress impiety and blasphemy, to protect sacred persons and property against the insolence and avarice of the soldiers, to invoke in every danger the God of armies, is the common care and duty of all generals. But he goes far beyond this. Even while commanding the army, he regards himself as a simple soldier of Jesus Christ. He sanctifies wars by the purity of his intentions, by the desire of a happy peace, and by the laws of Christian discipline. He looks upon his soldiers as his brethren, and believes himself under obligation to exercise Christian charity in a cruel profession, wherein general humanity itself is lost. Animated by these lofty motives, he surpasses himself, and proves that courage becomes firmer when sustained by the principles of religion, that there is a pious magnanimity which wins success in spite of dangers and obstacles, and that a warrior is invincible when he combats with faith, and stretches forth pure hands to the God of armies, who protects him.

As from God he derives all his glory, so to him he returns it all, and cherishes no other confidence than what is founded on the Divine approbation. Here let us set before you one of those critical occasions,† when he attacks with a small number of troops the entire forces of Germany! He marches three days, crosses three rivers, meets the enemy, and gives them battle. With numbers on

* The Peace of Munster.

† Battle of Entzeim.

one side, and valor on the other, fortune is long doubtful. At last courage fires the multitude; the enemy is confused, and begins to yield. "Victory!" shouts a voice. At once the General checks all emotion which gives ardor to battle, and in a severe tone says: "Silence! Our fate is not in our own hands, and we ourselves will be vanquished, if God does not succor us!" With these words, he raises his hands to heaven, "whence cometh help," and continuing to give his orders, he waits with submission between hope and fear, for the execution of Heaven's will.

How difficult it is to be at once victorious and humble! Military success leaves in the mind I know not what exquisite pleasure, which fills and absorbs it. In such circumstances one attributes to himself a superiority of force and capacity. He crowns himself with his own hands; he decrees to himself a secret triumph; he regards as his own the laurels which he gathers with infinite toil, and frequently moistens with his blood; and even when he renders to God solemn thanks, and hangs in his temples the torn and blood-stained trophies which he has taken from the enemy, is not vanity liable to stifle a portion of his gratitude, and mingle with the vows which he pays to God, applauses which he thinks due to himself; at least does he not retain some grains of the incense which he burns upon his altars?

It was on such occasions that Marshal Turenne, renouncing all pretensions, returned all the glory to Him to whom it legitimately belongs. If he marches, he acknowledges that it is God who protects and guides him; if he defends fortresses, he knows that he defends them in vain if God does not guard them; if he forms an intrenchment, he feels that it is God who forms a rampart around him to defend him from every attack; if he fights, he knows whence to draw all his force; and if he triumphs, he thinks that he sees an invisible hand crowning him from heaven. Referring thus all the favors he receives to their origin, he thence derives new blessings. No longer does he fear the enemies by whom he is surrounded; without being surprised at their numbers or strength, he exclaims with the prophet: "Some trust in their horses and chariots, but we will trust in the Almighty." In this steadfast and just confidence he redoubles his ardor, forms great designs, executes great things, and begins a campaign, which appears as if it must prove fatal to the empire.

He passes the Rhine, and eludes the vigilance of an accomplished and prudent general. He observes the movements of the enemy. He raises the courage of the allies; controls the suspicions and vacillating faith of neighboring powers. He takes away from the one the will, from the other the means of injuring him; and profiting by all those important conjunctures which prepare the way for great and glorious events, he leaves to fortune nothing which human skill and counsel can take from him. Already has a panic seized the enemy. Already has that eagle taken its flight to the mountains, whose bold approach alarmed our provinces. Those brazen mouths, invented by the bottomless pit for the destruction of men, thunder on all sides, to favor and precipitate the retreat; and France in suspense awaits the success of an enterprise which, according to all the rules of war, must be infallible.

Alas! we knew all that we might hope, but we knew not all that we might fear. Divine Providence concealed from us a calamity greater than the loss of a battle. It was to cost a life which each of us would have been willing to redeem with his own: and all that we could gain was of less value than what we were to lose. O God! terrible but just in Thy counsels toward the children of men, Thou disposest of victors and victories! To fulfill Thy pleasure, and cause us to fear Thy judgments, Thy power casts down those whom it has lifted up. Thou sacrificest to Thy Sovereign Majesty the noblest victims, and strikest, at Thy pleasure, those illustrious heads which Thou hast so often crowned!

Do not suppose, messieurs, that I am going to open here a tragic scene; to represent that great man stretched upon his own trophies; to uncover that body, blood-stained and ghastly, over which still lingers the smoke of the thunder which struck it; to cause his blood, like that of Abel's, to cry from the ground, or expose to your eyes the mournful images of your country and religion in tears! In slight losses we may thus surprise the pity of our auditors, and by studied efforts draw from their eyes a few forced and useless tears. But we describe without art, a death which we mourn without deceit. Every one finds in himself the source of his grief, and reopens his own wound; and it is not necessary to excite the imagination in order to affect the heart.

Here I am almost forced to interrupt my discourse. I am troubled, messieurs! Turenne dies! All is confusion—fortune vacillates—victory leaves us—peace takes its flight—the good intentions of the allies relax—the courage of the troops fails with grief, anon burns with vengeance—the whole army remain motionless. The wounded think of the loss which they have suffered, and not of the wounds which they have received. Dying fathers see their sons weeping over their dead General. The army, in mourning, is engaged in rendering him funeral honors, and fame, which delights to spread through the world extraordinary events, goes to make known through Europe the glorious history of the Prince's life, and the mournful regrets occasioned by his death.*

What sighs, what lamentations and praises, then re-echo through the cities and the country. One, looking upon his growing crops, blesses the memory of him to whom he owes the hope of his harvest. Another, who enjoys in repose the heritage which he received from his fathers, prays that eternal peace may be his who saved him from the horrors and cruelties of war. Here they offer the adorable sacrifice for him who sacrificed his life for the public good. There others prepare for him a funeral service, where they expected to prepare a triumph. Each selects for praise that point in his glorious life which appears the most illustrious. All unite in his eulogy. With mingled sobs and tears, they admire the past, regret the present, and tremble for the future. Thus the whole empire mourns the death of its defender. The loss of a single man is felt to be a public calamity.

Wherefore, my God, if I may presume to pour out my heart in Thy presence, and speak to Thee, who am but dust and ashes, wherefore did we lose him in our most pressing necessity, in the midst of his greatest achievements, at the highest point of his valor, and in the maturity of his wisdom? Was it that, after so many actions worthy of immortality, he had nothing further of a mortal nature to perform? Had the time arrived when he was to enjoy the reward of so many virtues, and receive from Thee the crown of righteousness which Thou reservest for such as have finished a glorious career? Perhaps we placed too much confidence in him, for Thou forbiddest us in the sacred Scriptures to trust in an arm of flesh, or put confidence in the children of men. Perhaps it was a punishment of our pride, ambition, and injustice. As the gross vapors ascend from the depths of the valleys, and form themselves into thunder which falls upon the mountains, so rises from the hearts of the people those iniquities, the punishment of which falls upon the heads of such as govern and defend them. I presume not, O

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* Turenne died July 27, 1675. He was surveying, from an eminence, the disposition of the hostile army, when he was struck with a cannon-ball, which also cut off the arm of an officer who was near him. The son of that officer ran to his father's aid, and shed over him a flood of tears. "It is not for me, my son, that you ought to weep," said the wounded officer, "but for that great man whom France has lost." He was honored with a magnificent funeral service, and buried in the royal tomb at St. Denis. Mascaron, Bishop of Tulle, pronounced his funeral oration. That by Flechier was delivered five months afterward, on the occasion of a grand religious ceremony.

Lord, to sound the depths of Thy judgments, nor to discover the secret and inscrutable causes from which Thy justice or Thy mercy acts. It is my duty and desire only to adore! But Thou art just, and Thou hast afflicted us. And in an age so corrupt as ours, we need not seek elsewhere the causes of our calamities, than in the disorder of our manners.

Let us then, messieurs, derive from our sorrows motives for penitence, and seek only in the piety of that great man, true and substantial consolation. Citizens, strangers, enemies, nations, kings and emperors, mourn and revere him. Yet what can all this contribute to his real happiness? His king even, and such a king! honors him with his regrets and tears—a noble and precious mark of affection and esteem for a subject, but useless to a Christian. He shall live, I acknowledge, in the minds and memories of men, but the Scripture teaches us that the thoughts of man, and man himself, are but vanity. A magnificent tomb may inclose his sad remains; but he shall rise again from that superb monument, not to be praised for his heroic exploits, but to be judged according to his work, whether good or bad. His ashes shall mingle with those of the numerous kings who governed the kingdom which he so generously defended; but, after all, what remains under those precious marbles, either to him or to them, of human applause, the pomp of courts, or the splendor of fortune, but an eternal silence, a frightful solitude, and a terrible expectation of the judgment of God? Let the world, then, honor as it will the glory of man, God only is the recompense of faithful Christians.

O death, too sudden! nevertheless, through the mercy of God, long anticipated, of how many edifying words, and holy examples hast thou deprived us? We might have seen him, sublime spectacle! a Christian, dying humbly in the midst of triumphs and victories. With what profound sincerity would he have mourned his past errors, abasing himself before the majesty of God, and imploring the succor of His arm, not against visible enemies, but against the enemies of his salvation! His living faith and fervent charity, doubtless, would have deeply affected our hearts; and he might have remained to us a model of confidence without presumption, of fear without feebleness, of penitence without artifice, of constancy without affectation, and of a death, precious in the sight both of God and of man.

Are not these conjectures just? They were involved in his character. They were his cherished designs. He had resolved to live in a manner so holy that it is presumed he would have died in the same way. Ready to cast all his crowns at the feet of Jesus Christ, like the conquerors in the Apocalypse, ready to gather together all his honors, and dispossess himself of them, by a voluntary renunciation, he no longer belonged to the world, though Providence retained him in it. In the tumult of armies, he solaced himself with the sweet and secret aspirations of solitude. With one hand he smote the Amalekites, and with the other, stretched out to heaven, he drew down the blessing of God. This Joshua, in battle, already performed the functions of Moses upon the Mount, and under the arms of a warrior bore the heart and will of a penitent.

O God! who piercest the profoundest depths of our conscience, and seest the most secret intentions of our hearts, even before they are formed, receive into the bosom of Thy glory that soul, ever occupied with thoughts of Thine eternity! Honor those desires which Thou Thyself didst inspire. Time failed him, but not the courage to fulfill them. If Thou requirest works with desires, behold the charities which he made or destined for the comfort and salvation of his brethren; behold the souls which, with Thine aid, he brought back from error; behold the blood of Thy people which he so frequently spared; behold his own blood which he so generously shed on our behalf; and yet more than all, behold the blood shed for him by Jesus Christ.

Ministers of God, complete the holy sacrifice! Christians redouble your vows and prayers, that God, as a recompense of his toils, may admit his spirit to the home of everlasting repose, and give *him* an infinite peace in heaven, who three times procured for us a peace on earth, evanescent it is true, yet ever delightful, ever desirable!

DISCOURSE FORTY-NINTH.

CHARLES DE LA RUE.

La Rue was a native of Paris, where he was born in the year 1643, and where he also died, aged 82. He was early distinguished among the Jesuits as a Professor of Belles-lettres and Rhetoric, and also for his poetical powers. A Latin poem of his was translated into the French by the distinguished Corneille. As a preacher, he was celebrated in the court and the capital. The editors of the "Bibliothèque Portative" speak of him in terms of the highest praise. Gisbert, in his "Christian Eloquence," describes La Rue, probably with somewhat of extravagance, as "a model of sublime, tender, and pathetic eloquence; in whom is united the liveliest, the most intelligent, the richest, and the boldest imagination, a most exalted genius, and an astonishing facility of conception and expression." La Rue's works are exceedingly rare. They are contained in three volumes, 12mo. His most celebrated sermons are the "Dying Sinner" and the "Sinner after Death."

THE DYING SINNER.

PREACHED BEFORE THE KING.

"When Jesus came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow."—Luke, vii. 12.

Sire—To be young and powerful, to be important and necessary, are vain obstacles to death. This dead man of our Gospel was in the flower of his age. He was dear and precious to a mother who had no other support. He was of sufficient rank to draw all the city to his splendid funeral procession. Yet he dies; and the sight of this death must render the idea of it more terrible to those attached to life by all these glittering bonds. But what can induce those to love it who have no such attractions? The only means of rendering death less terrible, is to make it a custom and a duty to think upon it.

Melancholy duty to think upon death; and, above all, when we are young! But because we are young, are we on that account to deem ourselves the less mortal? You are young and mortal; you are a sinner and mortal. And can a mortal, who feels himself a sinner, harden himself against the thought of death, whether he be young or old? especially as it does not depend upon him to prevent death in his youth; but rather to see that he die not in his sin. What blindness, then, and what obduracy, to turn all our thoughts to our preservation from death, which will come in spite of us, and must be either happy or miserable; instead of rather striving to render that death happy by immediately departing from sin!

I do not then mean to-day simply to discourse on death, but on death in sin; by describing to you the image of false conversion in a dying sinner, in contrast with the resurrection of the dead man in our Gospel.

You see two things concur to effect the resurrection of the dead man: the tender pity of the Saviour, and the prompt obedience of death. On the contrary, a dying sinner, under the hope of compassion from his God, and under the presumption of his own obedience, dares to defer his conversion till his last moment. Then will God wait to regard him with pity? No. Will even the dying sinner be ready to render Him obedience? No. Two terrible truths which it is too late to preach to the dying—what can they make of them? We must preach them to the living, full of confidence in their health, in their strength, in their youth. They will discover the end of them. And with this end in view, dear hearers, what will be the disposition of God toward the sinner? You will see it in the first part. What will be the disposition of the sinner himself toward God? You will see it in the second.

First Part.—Whether or not God may be disposed to bestow the grace of repentance upon the dying sinner, is a point too delicate to decide; for, in fact, God is the Master of His grace; He can dispose of it as He pleases; He sometimes gives it to the most unworthy. Besides, we do not know what passes between God and the dying man; we do not know how far His mercy extends; nor the compassion which He exercises toward the frailty of the human heart. What we at once condemn, perhaps God excuses. This is all that we can say in favor of the dying sinner. But, on the other hand, I see the Church, the expositor of Jesus Christ, deploring this sort of penitence; regarding it as an insult offered to God; doubting its efficacy, and anxiously turning away her children from it. All the holy Fathers, expressing themselves by the voice of St. Augustin, declare that in receiving the sinner to this sort of penitence, they can not give him the assurance of his salvation. To relieve the sinner from this fear, and to give him that assurance which the Church and the Fathers feel themselves incapable of giving, some superior authority is requisite: we must have nothing less than the authority of God. Let us then see what God has said, and what He has done in this matter. We have only these two means of knowing the truth.

What seems most to the point is that marvelous inclination to pardon which appears throughout the sacred books; and particularly the promise which God makes by the prophet Ezekiel: "As for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness." Nothing is apparently more favorable to the pretensions of the obstinate sinner. I say apparently, sirs, for let us duly examine the sense of these words. God promises to the sinner the forgiveness of his sins whenever he turns from his wickedness; but, does He promise to the sinner the grace of conversion at any time when he may think of turning from his evil ways? These are two very different things. You shall be pardoned when you are converted; this is what God has promised. You shall have grace sufficiently strong to convert yourself whenever you wish it; this is what God has not promised, and least of all to the sinner who abuses divine mercy even till his dying hour. For, although mercy still accompanies him till that period; although it does not abandon him while he is living upon earth; although he may yet have at least the ability to pray, which is the last resource and the last link of connection between the sinner and his God; yet this feeble link, which with time, and during life, might have become strong by the habitude of the sinner, and have led him by degrees to the end of his salvation, becomes useless on the bed of death, by the terror of surprise, and by the flight of time.

It then requires an energy more powerful and prompt to effect his conversion than even during the former course of his life. Then so far from God having promised to give the dying sinner this powerful grace, He has positively threatened not to give it him.

See the first chapter of Proverbs: "Because I have called, and ye refused;" I have invited, and you have not come. "I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded;" you have turned away your eyes. "I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh;" I, in My turn, will laugh at your death, I will return contempt for contempt, and mockery for mockery. "Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer;" You shall cry then, you shall call Me to your aid, but I will not hear. And, in the New Testament: "I go my way," after having dwelt so long with so little fruit among you; "and ye shall seek Me," when I shall be far from your sight; "and ye shall die in your sins;" in spite of your inquiries, ye shall die in your sins.

Here then, sinners, collect all the force of your reasoning. If it is true that God bestows the grace of conversion at death, often enough to support you in this hope; why, in all the sacred books, has God taken away this hope from you? Why has He never said to you that He might be disposed to give it you? Why has He said, on the contrary, "I will laugh;" "I will mock;" "I will not hear;" "ye shall die in your sins?" I hear nothing here of mercy or grace.

Then, from what He has said, judge of His disposition toward the obstinate sinner.

I go yet further: judge of it from what He has done. If it is true that this grace has ever been promised, it is probable that while there have been sinners, and dying sinners, God, to support His promise, would have given us some public example of a hardened sinner crowned with grace on the bed of death. Produce me, then, one solitary instance. St. Bernard finds but one; that of the thief upon the cross. I confess that this is a very great sinner; but is he a hardened sinner? This moment is the last of his life; but, says Eusebius, it is the first of his calling. You blame the tardiness of his conversion. I, says St. Ambrose, admire the promptitude of it. Had this thief ever seen the Son of God preaching repentance, proving His divinity, multiplying the loaves, and raising the dead? The eyes of all Judea were filled with the wonders of the Saviour; yet all Judea being hardened, had rejected His grace and fastened the Saviour to the cross. This thief, says St. Augustin, on discovering the first beam of His grace, recognizes Him as his King, and adores Him as his God, even upon the cross, in the midst of outrages and contempt. And behold, my dear hearers, the ground which you take, the model which you choose to authorize your presumption! You who, knowing the divinity of the Saviour, have for so many years resisted the convictions of His grace, which urge you to repent; do you not, on the contrary, find the condemnation of your own obstinate malice in the docility of this thief, and in his prompt obedience? Where then will you find examples which flatter you, if this example, which is so public, is a decree against you?

You point to sinners yet more criminal than yourselves, whose edifying deaths have made them the envy of the best of men; sinners who, after spending a libertine life, have died, say you, true Christians, and true saints. What, says St. Gregory of Nazianzen, does it cost so little to be a saint? Only a day, only a moment is necessary according to us; it is only to will it. Know that these people, whatever tears they may have shed, have not died true Christians. A true Christian does not defer his penitence till death. A true Christian does not wait for the day of his death to show that he is a true Christian. Every day, and every moment of his life, he is preparing for death. And, where is the man, if he is not wholly in despair, who on his dying bed, in the possession of his senses, and in the midst of his friends, does not at least make some effort to support the appearance of a Christian. It is rare to find railleries and blasphemies carried there: he has not then the hardihood to do it. One begins to preach; another sets all the churches to pray for his salvation, or at least for his health; another will only die in the arms of the greatest servants of God. Some cover their dying bodies with the sackcloth of repentance. All confess, and communicate with the aspirations of piety on their lips.

If nothing more were necessary to die the death of the righteous, all sinners on their dying beds would be saints. All those who say to God, Lord, Lord, would enter into His kingdom; which is contrary to the word of God. All those who have mocked at God, would not in their turn be mocked by God; which is also opposed to His word. All those who seek after God, after having fled from Him, would find Him at every moment and every hour, and would not die in their sin; which is likewise against His word. If, then, what God has said is true, the greater part of such kinds of repentance must be false, in spite of all the appearances which they have of truth—appearances which God permits for ends which are unknown to us; appearances which even the devil supports to draw other sinners into the snare, and to persuade them more powerfully that it is easy to die in a state of grace, after having lived in sin. Well then, my dear hearers, you have not any certain example to sustain your presumption. But I—I have a hundred to confound it: an Antiochus, an Esau; a crowd of frightful instances in Scripture and in history.

This being established, I draw from it three conclusions of great importance, if they may terminate in the salvation of those who hear me.

1. The first is, that no man living can promise himself the grace of repentance at death, without an extreme temerity. The second, that the great and the rich, above all, are those who ought to flatter themselves the least. The third, that in all conditions those who have received from God the favor of a long life, have yet less reason to expect this favor at death. Lose nothing, sirs, of these three truths which are so weighty and so pressing. You are all concerned in them.

I do not say that the dying sinner has nothing left to afford encouragement. Our Lord has expressly granted grace to the thief, to show us the extent of His power, and to support our hope. But He has granted this grace to the thief alone. It does not appear that He has bestowed it upon any other, which shows that the fear of danger ought to check our presumption and that what He has done once only in moments so touching as those of death, is but a pure miracle of His goodness.

To defer repentance, and to defer it even till death, is then to hazard salvation on the hope of a miracle. But, is this a conduct pardonable even in one of a common understanding, to make so rare a miracle the foundation of the most important and the most difficult of His affairs, which is that of His salvation? Would you make it the foundation of your health and life? For, only consult the Scripture, and it will appear that God has raised more from the dead than He has converted when dying. Would you, on this account, dare to risk your life and to expose yourself to death under the idea of a miraculous resurrection? And how then dare you to risk your salvation on the supposition of a miraculous conversion?

"God can," say you, "convert me at death, as easily as during life!" Is it then upon what God can do, that you rest your hope? And does God indeed do all that He can? He can on account of the first sin damn you as justly as He has damned the rebel angels; yet He does it not. He does not, then, all that He can: and since you do not fear all the injury which you may offer to His justice—how can you promise yourself all the good which His bounty can bestow upon you Is it not an effort of goodness and mercy sufficiently great that He resolves to pardon you seven times, and seventy times seven? that He calls you to repentance every day of your life? that He shows you the rapidity of time? that He cautions you against the danger of surprise? Does all this serve only to harden you in sin? to confirm you in the sad design of pushing His patience as far as it will go; and not rather to humble you before Him until the moment when you shall see your inevitable ruin approaching, and His arm uplifted against you to strike the last blow?—At death, you say, when He shall urge us by His grace—at death, we will think upon it—at death, we have other affairs now—at death, that will be the proper time to think upon God; now is the time to enjoy life. In this manner life passes away. But death is before your eyes, and what can you expect? what but that God will refuse to you at death, what you have refused during life—that He will make you feel that life was the time of grace, and not the time of pleasure? It is, then, an extreme temerity for any man living, to cherish the least hope of obtaining the grace of repentance in his last days—a temerity yet more criminal in the rich and the great. This is a second reflection.

2. Is it not enough for these to have had as their share the enjoyments of the earth? to have seen pleasure and joy flow on all sides answerably to their desires? to have united to the indulgences which spring from fortune, all those which crime and passion can give? If, after a long course of years, passed away with impunity in this tranquillity, they could, by a single sigh, by the repentance of a moment, open to themselves the gates of heaven, and pass from the felicities of time to those of eternity, where would be the justice and providence of God? Who, among the prosperous and great of the world, would not abandon himself to his passions, on condition of spending the last hour of his life in sorrow, and buying an eternity of pleasures with a few forced tears? It is justice and providence in God, that the tears shed at death should be useless tears, in order that men in general, and the great in particular, might learn to weep over their guilt, and to seek their salvation before death. For this cause the wise man cries to all those who have power and authority, that they must expect nothing else but a judgment prompt and terrible. A judgment prompt by its surprises, and terrible by its rigor; prompt without admitting any leisure to contemplate it; and terrible without the hope of mitigation.

And, Christian hearers, in the only example which we have of Divine clemency toward a dying sinner—in that solitary instance of the goodness of God in such a situation, upon whom has it fallen? Upon a miserable wretch, unknown by name, known only by his crimes, and by the honor which he enjoyed of being crucified by the side of Jesus Christ. All the examples, on the contrary, of the insensibility of God to the repentance of the dying, are taken from the most exalted characters, the most illustrious sinners. It is thus he has made it conspicuous. That Esau, who implored with tears to be received as a penitent, and who was not received, was the father and the head of an entire nation. That Antiochus, whose vain repentance has so often sounded in your ears, was the master of Asia, and the terror of all the East. Was it not of the greatest importance to the glory of the Lord to accept the submission of the greatest king who then existed; to see him magnificently repair the ravages which he had made in Jerusalem, establish the law of the true God throughout all his empire, and embrace it himself? What progress would not such a change seem to promise to religion? But to all this God appears to shut His eyes. He finds it a greater glory and a more important interest to undeceive the great respecting this false opinion: to show them that as He distinguishes them from others in the distribution of His favors, so if He honor them with forgiveness, they must from this time abase themselves to implore His pardon. He reproves the great, however penitent they appear, and lavishes the grace of repentance, so to speak, upon the head of a wretched brigand: because he sees more malignity, ingratitude, and presumption in the sins of the great than in the sins of the poor; a more voluntary inclination for all forbidden pleasures in the midst of all lawful enjoyments; a freedom from that want that hurries into vice, that necessity which presses on to it—and in the stead a continual abundance of all sorts of good, which aggravates their guilt—theirs, therefore, is the malignity of sin in all its extent. If there is, then, any favor to be hoped for by the sinner at death, it is less to be expected by the great than by the rest of the world.

3. And yet less still is mercy to be expected by those who have lived a long time in the world. This is my last reflection. I dare assert, sirs, that one of the most singular favors which God can confer upon men, not only with respect to their desires, but with respect to their salvation, is to give them a long life, which conducts them beyond the dangers of youth, and which affords them leisure to lament their disorders, and to correct their errors. For, to whatever excess we may be abandoned in the blindness of youth, how can it be otherwise but that in a course of years we must be awakened by some disgrace, alarmed by some sorrowful accident, disgusted at last with the world from the usage of the world itself, and convinced of the necessity of communion with God? All these gifts of God are included in this gift of old age; in that age which we have always feared, and which we have always hoped. To abuse this gift by attachment to the world, to pleasure, and to sin, is then to irritate God in the most sensible manner, and to shut the treasury of His goodness against us forever. Every day God is prolonging your life, but you shorten not the chain of your sins. Your lengthened

years are so many useless benedictions. Regard them, says St. Gregory, as so many maledictions, as so many signs and presages of your reprobation.

Why has the salvation of Solomon been held in doubt during so many ages? Is it not because of the abuse of his last years? His heart, upright till then, was corrupted in his old age: and his corrupted old age effaced all his past virtues. God no longer took pleasure in his wisdom, nor in his zeal for the glory of His name. If He showed him mercy at last, He has thought fit to leave us ignorant of it, to prevent the hardened sinner from availing himself of this example, and to teach us the hopelessness of old age, which is voluptuous and full of sin.

What, then, can they hope for, who, differing from Solomon in the employment of their youth, also imitate the excesses and shame of his last days? For more than forty years this king had been the example of the world, and the object of Divine approbation: yet all this has not prevented his salvation from being left in doubt. And, you sinners, who can scarcely remember that you have ever been righteous, who surpass your former irregularities every day, who are never weary of life but on account of the difficulty of finding new pleasures, upon what can you repose your confidence at death? To what can you impute your perseverance in evil? Have you wanted leisure to reflect upon your conduct, or light to see its errors, or examples to instruct you at the peril and expense of others? A thousand revolutions which have happened before your eyes, since you have been in the world, ought to have convinced you that none can escape from the arm of God. You have escaped from it during life, and you think yet to escape from it at death. No, your obduracy has no excuse: it will have no pardon!

What injustice does God do to you? No pardon? But why? Because there is no end to your sins! You have been filling up the measure of them all your days, and now, ready to quit life, you groan at its rapidity! You would fain be immortal, that you might render your libertinism immortal! And can you expect a happy immortality to be opened to you at death, you who would have placed your happiness in the immortality of your sin? No, it is to you that these words of the prophet Isaiah are properly addressed: "I have long time holden My peace, I have been still and refrained Myself," I have waited for you patiently, I am wearied. To you belongs what follows, "now will I cry like a travailing woman, I will destroy and devour at once." I will at length speak: but at the same time I will overwhelm you, I will destroy you. There shall be no interval between your course of life and your entire destruction. "But if at death," you say, "I seek on my part sincerely to obtain mercy, will God refuse it to me?" No: but what I wish to show you is, that at death you will never be *disposed* to seek mercy in a proper way. You have seen the disposition of God toward the dying sinner, now behold the disposition of the dying sinner toward God.

SECOND PART.—Let us approach the bed of this sinner, who is so bold that he encourages the hope of life even at the very gate of death, and yet so timid respecting his health, that he dare not so much as think upon God, lest he should impair it by some gloomy thought. But the hour arrives in which some faithful friend, wearied with complaisance and flattery, comes to him to say as the prophet to the ancient King of Judah—"Set thine house in order." Think on thyself; it is high time for it. Generally this is not without some circumlocution, nor without address. O how much caution is there to make a mortal understand that he must die! But now it is over! There is no more hope! A minister must be sent for. The sick man is pressed, and conjured; at length he is convinced of the fact. Then, seeking for some remains of firmness at the bottom of his heart, merely to support appearances, he abandons himself within to the confusion of his thoughts. Ah! what darkness of mind! what trouble of heart! Let us enter into both; into his mind and into his heart: and let us see what are their disposition toward God.

There are two sorts of light in the mind which tend to promote one's conversion—reason and faith. Reason, by awakening in him some natural motives, such as hatred and horror for his guilt: faith, by pressing him from supernatural motives.

But where is reason in the obstinate sinner? What has it done for him during the whole course of his life? What power has it had over him? Passion has always borne him away against the convictions of reason. Considerations of health and of modesty in youth; considerations of honor and interest in a more advanced age; considerations of health in old age—all were suppressed by the single attraction of pleasure. Behold from fifteen to fifty years, what is the force of reason upon the spirit of a libertine! At death, say you, reason will exert its strength; it will come forth from the tomb, when man shall be ready to enter into it: its light will awaken him, when life is almost extinguished. Think, O think of the embarrassments which then beset reason.

First, the burden of the disease; a soul plunged by the violence of pain into sorrow, into an invincible disquietude, collecting all its thoughts only to contemplate its misery. Nothing can be thought of but its malady; restlessness trembling, burning heats, perspirations, faintings, and perpetually increasing disquietness. Where is then the reason of the man? Would you allow him in this state to decide on your smallest affairs? Would you find in him sense enough to judge of them with propriety? How then can he have enough to decide with propriety on the affairs of his soul?

Besides the burden of the disease, there is another burden, that of the remedies. He is recommended to rest, sleep, and absence from whatever can disquiet him. Can he think seriously on his sins, without a cruel inquietude? Dispirited, disgusted with every thing, interrupted continually by the painful operations of the surgeons—not having sense enough to be persuaded that the love of life ought to overcome his disgust—can he have sufficient strength of mind to persuade himself that the love of his salvation ought to predominate over the love of his sin!

Beside the burden of his malady, and that of the remedies, there is another burden, that of his affairs. A family in confusion, the heirs embroiled, accounts to settle, debts to pay; offices and employments in danger; relations and friends in tears. All the world is fixing its eyes upon him; whatever arrests his attention seems to speak to him on business. And how can he think only on those affairs about which he has never thought before?

Behold that man of importance who has never had time during so many years to study his own heart, and to scrutinize his conscience. Why? sometimes it was a load of trouble, sometimes a weight of infirmities, and sometimes a press of business, which rendered him incapable of application. In each of these embarrassments, taken separately, he never found himself sufficiently free, nor his reason sufficiently in exercise, to think upon God. Imagine this to be your case. How then can any alteration take place, my dear brother? How will your mind be prepared when all these embarrassments together shall overwhelm you at death? When all the parts of your frame shall say to you, by the exhaustion of your strength—think of us. When your domestics shall say to you, by their feebly-acknowledged and ill-requited services—*think of us.* When your affairs shall say to you, by the disorder into which you have thrown them—*think of us.* When your creditors shall say to you, at the sight of their goods confounded with yours—*think of us.* When those persons who are dear to you shall say, by their sighs, alas! for the last time—*think of us.* Torn on every side, distracted by so many different cries—your reason, at its last gasp, shall cry from the bottom of your conscience—*think of thyself*, miserable man! *think of thyself!* Leave every thing besides, and think only of thyself! My dear brother, my dear friend, will your feeble reason be able to make itself heard?

Faith* will perhaps come to the help of reason, to make you quit all other cares, and apply yourself entirely to the care of your soul. Let us then see what is the situation of faith in the soul of the sinner. It is there: for where is it not? And were any one to say to me now, "It is not in me," I would say, you deceive yourself; it is in you, only surrounded with a thousand errors; obscured by a thousand doubts; concealed under the mask of impiety; without action, without strength, useless and languishing. In this condition, sometimes avoiding faith, and sometimes opposing it, we become insensible to it. We are accustomed to regard the cross as an indifferent object, and the Gospel as a fable. We are no longer touched by any thing. And do you persuade yourself that at the mere mention of death, at the first sight of danger, you shall feel faith revive in your soul? that this single thought—I must appear before God—will restore you to the respect which you have stifled for the cross, for the sacraments, and for the truths of religion? I admit it: but grant me what I am going to say.

If then your faith recover some strength, it will be but very feeble. It will never return with its former vigor, all of which you will then need. It will not destroy the habits of aversion to the things of the other life, of disgust and coldness toward God, habits rooted in you, and become, as it were your nature. An act of faith will be required of you, my dear brother; an act of faith, which will testify to God and all who are present, that you die in the sentiments of the Church. "Yes, I believe," says the dying man. You believe? That word is soon uttered, but is it deeply graven on your heart? Does it efface in one moment those ideas produced by so many libertine conversations, so many speculative studies, so many affected doubts, such disguised atheism, such imaginary power of reasoning? Oh! you who have reasoned so much upon the mysteries of religion, upon predestination, providence, immortality, divinity—you who railed so admirably at the credulity of the simple—you who knew so well the strength of your genius and the subtility of your discernment—you *now* say, "*I believe!*" You *now* reduce yourself to the rank of the simple and ignorant! You *now* renounce your worldly wisdom! Your reasons *now* then are of no avail! You have now no more scruples in these matters! It is now no longer a dishonor to you to say, with all the Church, I believe! These two words are indeed very powerful to make such a wonderful revolution in your mind in a moment!

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* By faith, as employed in this place, it is evident that the preacher means nothing more than the voluntary homage which nature generally pays to Revelation in the hour of affliction, or at the approach of death.—*Translator.*

But if you *do* believe with an undisguised faith, this is only the disposition of the understanding. What is there of the heart? for it is in the heart that conversion must be consummated. That heart ought to be free, sincere, and firm, which is truly converted: this is absolutely necessary. But the will of a dying sinner, far from being free, is forced; far from being firm, is weak, and always ready to change; far from being sincere, is double and disguised, and counterfeited. What appearance is there of conversion in the heart thus disposed?

There is no conversion without liberty. But is the divorce which is made at such a time from sin, free? Is it not really forced? Is it not the effect of fear and necessity? *You* forsake your sins? You are deceived, says St. Ambrose. Your sins forsake you! You say that you forsake, at least, the occasions and the objects of them. You are wrong, they are the occasions and the objects which forsake you! With what grief do you see them escaping! What would you not do still to recall them! And you boast that you have forsaken them! You say you offer your life to God in expiation for your sins. Imaginary sacrifice! Vain and foolish presumption! It is God who takes your life away from you. You have never dreamed but of life, while there was the least hope of saving it. You have struggled to preserve it even to the last spark. And now you pretend to offer it, and to sacrifice it to God, when it is no longer your own!

But suppose the offering to be free, suppose the change to be unconstrained: what is its duration? Till death? Ah, would to God that it were! For, without noticing the usual relapses of the greater part of those who escape the danger, how much is to be feared from inconstancy and lightness of heart, even in the moment of death? To how many unforeseen assaults and new temptations is the man then exposed? You have never known how to combat them during life, how then can you repulse them at death? How necessary was it for you in full health to receive supplies of grace when you visited the Church, that sacred place, where you applied to receive them? What was then wanted to recall you to sin? Often nothing else but a recollection, an idea, a sudden return of affection for some detested objects. When in full health, nothing more was requisite to bring you under the yoke of your first tyrant. What will then be necessary in the diminution of your strength, and in the increase of his fury against a soul that has always been his slave, and that must soon be his prey? Let then one single sin, a sin of habit, a sin of the heart, present itself to the sinner's mind, to his feeble imagination—let the heart, yet more feeble, indulge this phantom with a parley but for a moment, and express but one single sentiment of regret—ah! he abandons himself—he abandons himself, to return to himself no more! It is done! It is the last movement of that heart, the last breath of life, the decisive sigh of a wretched eternity! Zealous ministers, sympathizing friends, pray, weep, bear to his deaf ears the name of the Saviour! exhibit that Saviour upon the cross! redouble your aspirations and your cries! You see not the bottom of that mind nor of that heart! God sees it! God condemns it! He is dead—he is damned!

"But is it necessary for his damnation, that, while he breathes his last, the phantom of his sin should be brought to his recollection, and be retraced in his heart?" Had it ever quitted it? Had he ever sincerely detested it? Far from it. What is it to be truly converted? It is to love what you have hated; it is to hate what you have loved; it is to love God above all created good; it is to hate sin more than all other evils. A change so difficult, and yet so necessary and important, is not effected without diligence, and above all, without courage. But in the moment of exigency, to what feebleness has habit reduced the sinner? The enormity of his sins, the facility with which he has sinned, his insensibility to sin, have generated a multitude of difficulties. Slow to fly it, to avoid it, to quit it, from the tender years of youth, and in every future stage of life—he said an hundred times to those who pressed him to forsake it—No, I can not, I can not now; do not speak to me about it, I can not. And *now*, when the soul hangs trembling on the lips, how can he have sufficient courage and firmness resolutely to say—I can, yes, I can!

Can you, my dear brother, hear then what the minister says to you, while performing his office for the last time?—You believe. This is not enough, my dear brother. You must love God. This is the essential point. Without love to God there is no salvation.—"Well," answers the dying man, "I must love God."—"What must I say?"—"But how?"—"What must I do?"—"Aid me!"

Aid you! O sinner, object of pity, *aid* you to love God! Did you need any aid to make you love the world, its fashions, its vanities, its company, its excess—into which your depraved heart hurried itself without any difficulty? You were created to love God; for this is the end of man. You were created to love God, but you have never loved Him in the whole course of your life, and yet you expect to love Him at the moment when you are about to die, and even in that deplorable moment you want aid to love Him!

Poor substitute for a duty necessarily personal! Useless substitute! The love of God on the lips of a minister, only at the moment when it ought to be in the midst of your heart! If this love was there, if it was in your heart, how would it make you feel the evil of sin! how would it make you feel *itself!* Can a heart *love* without feeling it? By what outgushings will not the love of God make itself known in the hearts of penitent saints? To what lengths did not the love of God go in the heart of Saint Paul? He loved God so as to call all the powers of earth, heaven, and hell to be witnesses of his love: so as to defy all creatures to separate him from his love! "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" This man says that he is a penitent, Sirs, that is to say that there is nothing that can dispute the first place in his heart with God. That is to say that he no longer loves any thing that is opposed to God, nor more than God, nor like God. There is no conversion unless we have all these preferences for God. And how can we have them, and feel nothing? —and not be able, without being taught, to say to God, "*my* God, I *love* Thee?" Ah! Thou wilt then be the only being, O thou God of inexhaustible goodness—Thou wilt be the only being that can be loved, without feeling that we love Thee, and without being able to express it! We may then die, like Christians, in the hope of Thy glory, without ever having exercised the essential act of a Christian during life, and knowing how to exercise it after death!

Think, sirs, on the grief of a zealous and sincere minister at the sight of this stupidity in a dying man! Perplexed about what he must do, not daring to deprive him of hope, and seeing no foundation on which to give him encouragement! Fearing lest he should flatter him by too much tenderness, and still more lest he should drive him to despair by too much boldness! Mistrusting equally his pity and his zeal—Ah! if in this embarrassment he could release you from the obligation of loving God—if he could make up for your insensibility by the ardor of his words, and the tenderness of his heart—might not this be acceptable with God?

No, this will not do, my dear brother! We must *personally* believe and *personally* love. O moments lost forever, in which, during the whole course of your life, you might have loved God, might have learned to love Him, might have accustomed yourself to love

Him! Precious moments! in which Divine grace solicited your heart—in which all the obstinacy of your malice it was necessary to resist! Then, then, God spake! The mind and the heart had but to follow! Now God speaks no more! His mind and His heart are shut against your misery! Your mind and your heart are shut against His mercy! What do you expect but the rigors of His justice? My hearers, you still possess these precious moments! God addresses you while I address you! Expect not that these moments will never pass away! Make use of them in the exercise of a prompt repentance! So be it—in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit!

DISCOURSE FIFTIETH.

FRANÇOIS DE SALIGNAC DE LA MOTHE-FÉNÉLON.

The celebrated Fénélon was born in 1651, at Perigord. He was educated at Cohoes and Paris; took orders at the age of twenty-four; and subsequently, at different periods, acted as minister in the parish of St. Sulpice, Abbé, or Superior of an institution of "New Catholics," missionary to convert the Protestants, and tutor to the Dukes of Burgundy, Anjou, and Berri. His success in this last position led to his elevation to the Archbishopric of Cambray; where, after a life of purity, prayer, and pious effort, sometimes saddened by persecution for righteousness' sake, principally by Bossuet, for his doctrines of Quietism, he died in 1715, uttering as his last words, "Thy will be done."

Fénélon, notwithstanding his adherence to the Catholic faith, was a man of deep piety, and remarkable zeal and sincerity of purpose. He was called "the good Archbishop of Cambray," and, as marking the contrast between him and Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, it was a common remark that "*l'un prouve la religion, l'autre la fait aimer.*"—The one *proves* religion; the other causes it to be *loved.*

He used to say, "I spend much time in my closet, in order to be prepared for the pulpit, and to be sure that my heart is filled from the Divine Fountain, before I am to pour out the streams upon the people." As a preacher, he had not the reputation of an *orator*, and seems to have studiously avoided the ornamental for the *solid* beauties founded on nature and good sense. Cardinal Maury characterizes his as an "Eloquence soft and flowing, which, far from exciting violent emotions, gently insinuates itself into the soul, and awakens the most tender affections." D'Alembert says of his works, "Their most touching charm is the sensation of peace, and repose, with which he inspires the reader." The literary works of Fénélon are well known, such as his admirable "Dialogues on Eloquence," and his "Télémaque." There are but four of his sermons extant: one on "Foreign Missions," the others on "Prayer," "Piety," and the "Consecration of the Elector of Cologne." That on Prayer, especially, while it lacks the lofty utterances of some of Fénélon's cotemporaries, is an admirable production. It has been pronounced with great propriety, "*a chef-d'œuvre* for simplicity, argument, piety, and composition." Few men have been better qualified to speak on this subject than the good Fénélon; of whom it was said by one who enjoyed his friendship, "while he watched over his flock with a daily care, he *prayed* in the deep retirement of internal solitude." The sermon, in the original, is without a text, as are all the four above-mentioned, except that on "Missions." We append one that is appropriate, and probably, from a single allusion, that on which the author discoursed.

THE SAINT'S CONVERSE WITH GOD.

"Pray without ceasing."—1 Thes. v. 17.

Of all the duties enjoined by Christianity, none is more essential, and yet more neglected, than prayer. Most people consider this exercise a wearisome ceremony, which they are justified in abridging as much as possible. Even those whose profession or fears lead them to pray, do it with such languor and wanderings of mind, that their prayers, far from drawing down blessings, only increase their condemnation. I wish to demonstrate, in this discourse, first, the general necessity of prayer; secondly, its peculiar duty; thirdly, the manner in which we ought to pray.

First. God alone can instruct us in our duty. The teachings of men, however wise and well disposed they may be, are still ineffectual, if God do not shed on the soul that light which opens the mind to truth. The imperfections of our fellow-creatures cast a shade over the truths that we learn from them. Such is our weakness that we do not receive, with sufficient docility, the instructions of those who are as imperfect as ourselves. A thousand suspicions, jealousies, fears, and prejudices prevent us from profiting, as we might, by what we hear from men; and though they announce the most serious truths, yet what they do, weakens the effect of what they say. In a word, it is God alone who can perfectly teach us.

St. Bernard said, in writing to a pious friend—If you are seeking less to satisfy a vain curiosity than to get true wisdom, you will sooner find it in deserts than in books. The silence of the rocks and the pathless forests will teach you better than the eloquence of the most gifted men. "All," says St. Augustin, "that we possess of truth and wisdom, is a borrowed good, flowing from that fountain, for which we ought to thirst in the fearful desert of this world, that, being refreshed and invigorated by these dews from heaven, we may not faint upon the road that conducts us to a better country. Every attempt to satisfy the cravings of our hearts at other sources, only increases the void. You will be always poor, if you do not possess the only true riches." All light that does not proceed from God, is false; it only dazzles us; it sheds no illumination upon the difficult paths in which we must walk, along the precipices that are about us.

Our experience and our reflections can not, on all occasions, give us just and certain rules of conduct. The advice of our wisest and most sincere friends is not always sufficient; many things escape their observation, and many that do not are too painful to be spoken. They suppress much from delicacy, or sometimes from a fear of transgressing the bounds that our friendship and confidence in them will allow. The animadversions of our enemies, however severe or vigilant they may be, fail to enlighten us with regard to ourselves. Their malignity furnishes our self-love with a pretext for the indulgence of the greatest faults. The blindness of our self-love is so great that we find reasons for being satisfied with ourselves, while all the world condemn us. What must we learn from all this darkness? That it is God alone who can dissipate it; that it is He alone whom we can never doubt; that He alone is true, and knoweth all things; that if we go to Him in sincerity, He will teach us what men dare not tell us, what books can not—*all* that is essential for us to know.

Be assured that the greatest obstacle to true wisdom is the self-confidence inspired by that which is false. The first step toward this precious knowledge, is, earnestly to *desire* it, to *feel the want of it*, and to be convinced that they who seek it must address themselves to the Father of lights, who freely gives to him who asks in faith. But if it be true that God alone can enlighten us, it is not the less true that He will do this, simply in answer to our prayers. Are we not happy, indeed, in being able to obtain so great a blessing by only asking for it? No part of the effort that we make to acquire the transient enjoyments of this life, is necessary to obtain these heavenly blessings. What will we not do, what are we not willing to suffer, to possess dangerous and contemptible things, and often without any success? It is not thus with heavenly things. God is always ready to grant them to those who make the request in sincerity and truth. The Christian life is a long and continual tendency of our hearts toward that eternal goodness which we desire on earth. All our happiness consists in thirsting for it. Now this thirst is prayer. Ever desire to approach your Creator, and you will never cease to pray.

Do not think that it is necessary to pronounce many words. To pray is to say, Let Thy will be done. It is to form a good purpose; to raise your heart to God; to lament your weakness; to sigh at the recollection of your frequent disobedience. This prayer demands neither method, nor science, nor reasoning; it is not essential to quit one's employment; it is a simple movement of the heart toward its Creator, and a desire that whatever you are doing you may do it to His glory. The best of all prayers is to act with a pure intention, and with a continual reference to the will of God. It depends much upon ourselves whether our prayers be efficacious. It is not by a miracle, but by a movement of the heart that we are benefited; by a submissive spirit. Let us believe, let us trust, let us hope, and God never will reject our prayer. Yet how many Christians do we see strangers to the privilege, aliens from God, who seldom think of Him, who never open their hearts to Him; who seek elsewhere the counsels of a false wisdom, and vain and dangerous consolations; who can not resolve to seek, in humble, fervent prayer to God, a remedy for their griefs and a true knowledge of their defects, the necessary power to conquer their vicious and perverse inclinations, and the consolations and assistance they require, that they may not be discouraged in a virtuous life.

But some will say, "I have no interest in prayer; it wearies me; my imagination is excited by sensible and more agreeable objects, and wanders in spite of me."

If neither your reverence for the great truths of religion, nor the majesty of the ever-present Deity, nor the interest of your eternal salvation, have power to arrest your mind, and engage it in prayer, at least mourn with me for your infidelity; be ashamed of your weakness, and wish that your thoughts were more under your control; and desire to become less frivolous and inconstant. Make an effort to subject your mind to this discipline. You will gradually acquire habit and facility. What is now tedious will become delightful; and you will then feel, with a peace that the world can not give nor take away, that God is good. Make a courageous effort to overcome yourself. There can be no occasion that more demands it.

Secondly. The peculiar obligation of prayer. Were I to give all the proofs that the subject affords, I should describe every condition of life, that I might point out its dangers, and the necessity of recourse to God in prayer. But I will simply state that under all circumstances we have need of prayer. There is no situation in which it is possible to be placed, where we have not many virtues to acquire and many faults to correct. We find in our temperament, or in our habits, or in the peculiar character of our minds, qualities that do not suit our occupations, and that oppose our duties. One person is connected by marriage to another whose temper is so unequal that life becomes a perpetual warfare. Some, who are exposed to the contagious atmosphere of the world, find themselves so susceptible to the vanity which they inhale that all their pure desires vanish. Others have solemnly promised to renounce their resentments, to conquer their aversions, to suffer with patience certain crosses, and to repress their eagerness for wealth; but nature prevails, and they are vindictive, violent, impatient, and avaricious.

Whence comes it that these resolutions are so frail? that all these people wish to improve, desire to perform their duty toward God and man better, and yet fail? It is because our own strength and wisdom, alone, are not enough. We undertake to do every thing without God; therefore we do not succeed. It is at the foot of the altar that we must seek for counsel which will aid us. It is with God that we must lay our plan of virtue and usefulness; it is He alone that can render them successful. Without Him, all our designs, however good they may appear, are only temerity and delusion. Let us then pray, that we may learn what we are and what we ought to be. By this means, we shall not only learn the number and the evil effects of our peculiar faults, but we shall also learn to what virtues we are called, and the way to practice them. The rays of that pure and heavenly light that visits the humble soul, will beam on us; and we shall feel and understand that every thing is possible to those who put their whole trust in God. Thus, not only to those who live in retirement, but to those who are exposed to the agitations of the world and the excitements of business, it is peculiarly necessary, by contemplation and fervent prayer, to restore their souls to that serenity which the dissipations of life, and commerce with men have disturbed. To those who are engaged in business, contemplation and prayer are much more difficult than to those who live in retirement; but it is far more necessary for them to have frequent recourse to God in fervent prayer. In the most holy occupation, a certain degree of precaution is necessary.

Do not devote all your time to action, but reserve a certain portion of it for meditation upon eternity. We see Jesus Christ inviting His disciples to go apart, in a desert place, and rest awhile, after their return from the cities, where they had been to announce His religion. How much more necessary is it for us to approach the source of all virtue, that we may revive our declining faith and charity, when we return from the busy scenes of life, where men speak and act as if they had never known that there is a God! We should look upon prayer as the remedy for our weaknesses, the rectifier of our faults. He who was without sin, prayed constantly; how much more ought we, who are sinners, to be faithful in prayer!

Even the exercise of charity is often a snare to us. It calls us to certain occupations that dissipate the mind, and that may degenerate into mere amusement. It is for this reason that St. Chrysostom says that nothing is so important as to keep an exact proportion between the interior source of virtue, and the external practice of it; else, like the foolish virgins, we shall find that the oil in our lamp is exhausted when the bridegroom comes.

The necessity we feel that God should bless our labors, is another powerful motive to prayer. It often happens that all human help is vain. It is God alone that can aid us, and it does not require much faith to believe that it is less our exertions, our foresight, and our industry, than the blessing of the Almighty, that can give success to our wishes.

Thirdly. Of the manner in which we ought to pray. 1. We must *pray with attention.* God listens to the voice of the heart, not to that of the lips. Our whole heart must be engaged in prayer. It must fasten upon what it prays for; and every human object must disappear from our minds. To whom should we speak with attention, if not to God? Can He demand less of us than that we should think of what we say to Him? Dare we hope that He will listen to us, and think of us, when we forget ourselves in the midst of our prayers? This attention to prayer, which it is so just to exact from Christians, may be practiced with less difficulty than we imagine. It is true, that the most faithful souls suffer from occasional involuntary distractions. They can not always control their imaginations, and, in the silence of their spirits, enter into the presence of God. But these unbidden wanderings of the mind ought not to trouble us; and they may conduce to our perfection even more than the most sublime and affecting prayers, if we earnestly strive to overcome them, and submit with humility to this experience of our infirmity. But to dwell willingly on frivolous and worldly things, during prayer, to make no effort to check the vain thoughts that intrude upon this sacred employment, and come between us and the Father of our spirits—is not this choosing to live the sport of our senses, and separated from God?

2. We must also *ask with faith;* a faith so firm that it never fal-

ters. He who prays without confidence can not hope that his prayer will be granted. Will not God love the heart that trusts in Him? Will He reject those who bring all their treasures to Him, and repose every thing upon His goodness? When we pray to God, says St. Cyprian, with entire assurance, it is Himself who has given us the spirit of our prayer. Then it is the Father listening to the words of His child; it is He who dwells in our hearts, teaching us to pray. But must we not confess that this filial confidence is wanting in all our prayers? Is not prayer our resource only when all others have failed us? If we look into our hearts, shall we not find that we ask of God as if we had never before received benefits from Him? Shall we not discover there a secret infidelity, that renders us unworthy of His goodness? Let us tremble, lest, when Jesus Christ shall judge us, He pronounces the same reproach that He did to Peter, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

3. We must join *humility with trust.* Great God, said Daniel, when we prostrate ourselves at Thy feet, we do not place our hopes for the success of our prayers upon our righteousness, but upon Thy mercy. Without this disposition in our hearts, all others, however pious they may be, can not please God. Saint Augustin observes that the failure of Peter should not be attributed to insincerity in his zeal for Jesus Christ. He loved his Master in good faith; in good faith he would rather have died than have forsaken Him; but his fault lay in trusting to his own strength, to do what his own heart dictated.

It is not enough to possess a right spirit, an exact knowledge of duty, a sincere desire to perform it. We must continually renew this desire, and enkindle this flame within us, at the fountain of pure and eternal light.

It is the humble and contrite heart that God will not despise. Remark the difference which the Evangelist has pointed out between the prayer of the proud and presumptuous Pharisee, and the humble and penitent Publican. The one relates his virtues, the other deplores his sins. The good works of the one shall be set aside, while the penitence of the other shall be accepted. It will be thus with many Christians. Sinners, vile in their own eyes, will be objects of the mercy of God; while some, who have made professions of piety, will be condemned on account of the pride and arrogance that have contaminated their good works. It will be so, because these have said in their hearts, "Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other men are." They imagine themselves privileged souls; they pretend that they alone have penetrated the mysteries of the kingdom of God;

they have a language and science of their own; they believe that their zeal can accomplish every thing. Their regular lives favor their vanity; but in truth they are incapable of self-sacrifice, and they go to their devotions with their hearts full of pride and presumption. Unhappy are those who pray in this manner! Unhappy are they whose prayers do not render them more humble, more submissive, more watchful over their faults, and more willing to live in obscurity!

4. We must *pray with love.* It is love, says St. Augustin, that asks, that seeks, that knocks, that finds, and that is faithful to what it finds. We cease to pray to God as soon as we cease to love Him, as soon as we cease to thirst for His perfections. The coldness of our love is the silence of our hearts toward God. Without this we may *pronounce* prayers, but we do not pray; for what shall lead us to meditate upon the laws of God, if it be not the love of Him who has made these laws? Let our hearts be full of love, then, and they will pray. Happy are they who think seriously of the truths of religion; but far more happy are they who feel and love them! We must ardently desire that God will grant us spiritual blessings; and the ardor of our wishes must render us fit to receive the blessings. For if we pray only from custom, from fear, in the time of tribulation—if we honor God only with our lips, while our hearts are far from Him—if we do not feel a strong desire for the success of our prayers—if we feel a chilling indifference in approaching Him who is a consuming fire—if we have no zeal for His glory—if we do not feel hatred for sin, and a thirst for perfection, we can not hope for a blessing upon such heartless prayers.

5. We must *pray with perseverance.* The perfect heart is never weary of seeking God. Ought we to complain if God sometimes leaves us to obscurity, and doubt, and temptation? Trials purify humble souls, and they serve to expiate the faults of the unfaithful. They confound those who, even in their prayers, have flattered their cowardice and pride. If an innocent soul, devoted to God, suffer from any secret disturbance, it should be humble, adore the designs of God, and redouble its prayers and its fervor. How often do we hear those who every day have to reproach themselves with unfaithfulness toward God, complain that He refuses to answer their prayers! Ought they not to acknowledge that it is their *sins* which have formed a thick cloud between Heaven and them, and that God has justly hidden Himself from them? How often has He recalled us from our wanderings! How often, ungrateful as we are, have we been deaf to His voice, and insensible to His goodness! He would

make us feel that we are blind and miserable when we forsake Him. He would teach us, by privation, the value of the blessings that we have slighted. And shall we not bear our punishment with patience? Who can boast of having done all that he ought to have done; of having repaired all his past errors; of having purified his heart, so that he may claim as a right that God should listen to his prayer? Most truly, all our pride, great as it is, would not be sufficient to inspire such presumption! If then, the Almighty do not grant our petitions, let us adore His justice, let us be silent, let us humble ourselves, and let us pray without ceasing. This humble perseverance will obtain from Him what we should never obtain by our own merit. It will make us pass happily from darkness to light; for know, says St. Augustin, that God is near to us even when He appears far from us.

6. We should pray *with a pure intention.* We should not mingle in our prayers what is false with what is real; what is perishable with what is eternal; low and temporal interests, with that which concerns our salvation. Do not seek to render God the protector of your self-love and ambition, but the promoter of your good desires. You ask for the gratification of your passions, or to be delivered from the cross, of which He knows you have need. Carry not to the foot of the altar irregular desires, and indiscreet prayers. Sigh not there for vain and fleeting pleasures. Open your heart to your Father in heaven, that His Spirit may enable you to ask for the true riches. How can He grant you, says St. Augustin, what you do not yourself desire to receive? You pray every day that His will may be done, and that His kingdom may come. How can you utter this prayer with sincerity when you prefer your own will to His, and make His law yield to the vain pretexts with which your self-love seeks to elude it? Can you make this prayer—you who disturb His reign in your heart by so many impure and vain desires?—you, in fine, who fear the coming of His reign, and do not desire that God should grant what you seem to pray for? No! if He, at this moment, were to offer to give you a new heart, and render you humble, and meek, and self-denying, and willing to bear the cross, your pride would revolt, and you would not accept the offer; or you would make a reservation in favor of your ruling passion, and try to accommodate your piety to your humor and fancies!

DISCOURSE FIFTY-FIRST.

JAQUES ABBADIE, D.D.

This distinguished Protestant divine was born at Naï, near to Pau, in Bearn, in the year 1654. Having been thoroughly educated in the University, he was ordained pastor of the French church, at Berlin, where his influence became great, and especially beneficial to the refugees who fled thither from the persecution of Louis XIV. In the summer of 1689 he visited Ireland, where he was made minister of the Savoy, and afterward advanced to the deanery of Killaloe. He died in 1727. The works of Dr. Abbadie are numerous, the most celebrated of which are "The Art of Knowing One's self," a treatise on the "Divinity of Christ," and one on the "Truth of the Christian Religion." Of the second of these, Booth says, "Few have repelled the adversary with those powers of genius, and that force of argument, which were employed by Dr. Abbadie in composing this admirable treatise." Of the latter many critics and able writers, both Catholic and Protestant, have spoken with admiration. The celebrated Marchioness de Sévigné says, "It is the most divine of all books: this estimate is general. I do not believe that any writers have described religion like this man."

Dr. Abbadie always passed for one of the first preachers of his time. His sermons discover order and fitness in their arrangement, and great solidity and force of persuasion. They also bear obvious traces of a fine and far-reaching imagination, and a great Master, who designs and executes with dignity and spirit. They are contained in three volumes 12mo., and are very rarely met with. It is much to be desired that they were rendered available to the English reader by a translation. All will concur in this opinion who read the following masterly production.

THE SACRIFICE OF ABRAHAM.

"And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son."—Gen. xxii. 10.

"The wicked worketh a deceitful work." This is a maxim of the wise man, which we explained to you last Sunday. The righteous also sometimes does a work which deceives him. This is a truth which we are going to exhibit to day. The wicked destroys himself by the efforts which he employs to promote his own gratification. The believer attains an invaluable object when he seems to act against his own interest. This, my brethren, is a truth which the sacrifice of Abraham admirably confirms: here we find a spectacle of horror in appearance; and we see a holy spectacle in reality. It seems, on beholding this object, as if hell must surely triumph; and it is heaven which finally vanquishes. An action which we should suppose all must detest, becomes the eternal object of their admiration. The pulpits propose it for a model and an example. The memory of it is celebrated in all ages; and all believers, to the end of time, must make it the perpetual subject of conversation, the constant theme of their praise. It is, then, not without cause, that we ask of you to apply yourselves to the consideration of this sublime object. "And Abraham," says the sacred text, "stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son."

It is useless to relate to you the account which is contained in the preceding verses. It is a history too well known for any of you to be ignorant of it. You know that God, wishing to try Abraham, commanded him to take his son, and go and sacrifice him upon a mountain, of which he would tell him. You know, also, that this great and illustrious servant of God obeyed the voice of heaven, and took two of his young men to attend him in his journey—that being arrived near the place where his faith must be thus tried, he ordered his servants to wait for him while he went forward accompanied only by his son—that Isaac, little instructed in his design, asked him—"Where is the lamb for the burnt-offering?" To which Abraham replied—"My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt-offering;" which afterward occasioned this proverb known among the Jews, "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen;" and on account of which this mountain was called after the event, by the name of Moriah. You know that Abraham, having prepared the altar and laid the wood in order, took the submissive, the obedient, the innocent Isaac—that he bound him, and fastened him to the altar; and that finally he prepared to finish the most sorrowful and painful sacrifice of which the imagination can conceive. It is this last circumstance, my brethren, which supposes all the others, and which constitutes the essential part of that sacrifice which we must now examine. "And Abraham," says the Scripture, "stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son."

Although these words are sufficiently plain in themselves, it may not be unprofitable to devote a portion of time to their contemplation; that we may understand the mysteries which they include, and the fruits which we may derive from them. They are capable of three different senses—a literal sense, a mystical sense, and a moral sense. The first relates to the simple facts which they narrate; the second includes the mysteries which they represent; the third communicates instruction to our consciences. The sacrifice of Abraham is a singular and astonishing event, which is highly worthy of our consideration. The sacrifice of Abraham is an admirable type of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which we can not describe to you under too many images. The sacrifice of Abraham is a model from which we may form the desire of sacrificing to God whatever is most dear to us; a duty upon which we can not bestow too much attention. These are the three parts of this discourse. The first will show you Abraham lifting the knife to plunge it into the bosom of his son; the second will show you God Himself, with uplifted arm, inflicting His strokes upon His eternal Son, conformably to that ancient type; the third will show you the believer holding in his hand the sword of the Spirit, and sacrificing the dearest passions of his heart. You will see in the first a material fire ready to consume Isaac, the burnt-offering of Abraham; you will see in the second the fires of Divine justice surrounding Jesus Christ, the burnt-offering of God; you will see in the last the sacred fire of the Spirit of God, consuming the vices and passions of our hearts, the burnt-offering of the believer.

O that our hearts, inflamed with this Divine fire, and burning with zeal, may present themselves to-day as so many voluntary victims to that great God, who calls them to mortification and to repentance! O that the Father of believers may to-day add largely to the number of His children, through the immolation of His Son! O that grace may render Him our Father, though the connection seems to have ceased by nature! O that heaven, which arrested the arm that Abraham had already lifted up with so much resolution and courage, may to-day animate and sustain our arms, to enable us to sacrifice to God our sins and our vices! O that we may to-day become so many innocent Isaacs! O that we may be changed into so many courageous Abrahams! But this is not our work, it is the work of God; let us beseech Him to animate and encourage us, that we may sacrifice ourselves to Him, at the sight of the sacrifice of Abraham; and that after being immolated, like Isaac, we may revive and be able to glorify Him in our bodies and our souls eternally. Amen.

First Part.—That we may properly ascertain the extent of Abraham's virtue, we must consider the relative situation in which he is placed at this critical period. Abraham is a man; he is a father; he adds faith to the promises which God has already given him, and he is filled with love and zeal for his God. The action which he is called to perform, by an order from heaven, seems to violate all these relations, and absolutely to annihilate these qualities. Abraham finds that all the affections of the man, all the tenderness of the father, the confidence and faith of the believer, the love and zeal of a saint, are opposed to his design of offering up his son. Humanity shudders at this bloody spectacle; nature abhors it; faith seems to resist it. Zeal and love for God can not endure the idea of it. Let us examine these four conflicts, which terminate in four crowns for our triumphant patriarch.

Human nature beholds the ordinary death of man only with pain; but it looks upon their bloody death with peculiar repugnance. That horror which our nature feels at human bloodshed, has even attached a kind of infamy to the profession of those who execute the most righteous decrees, and who punish the guilty. How much greater, then, is this infamy when *innocent* blood is spilled? When any one, impelled by the violence of passion, commits a murder, he draws down upon himself the hatred of heaven and earth. And what is it but murder to sacrifice a man in cold blood, after three days' deliberation, after an example of obedience and constancy so rare as that of this man who presents himself to be immolated? Yet Abraham, a man, perceives nothing which does not move him to compassion. Abraham, a father, feels nothing which does not plead with him in favor of his son. His interest stands opposed to this sorrowful sacrifice. He has been accustomed to view Isaac as the support of his life, and he must now devote him to death. His regard for the honor of his character can not allow him to consent. The death of his son will fix an eternal stigma on his memory. He has hitherto been an example of justice and of piety, beloved by his neighbors, and respected by the nations among whom he has sojourned; and this action is going to render him odious to the whole world. He will draw down upon himself the hatred and imprecations of all mankind. All nations and all ages will regard him as an assassin of his own son; as an enemy of his own bowels, who pretended to murderous revelations, and a cruel piety, to commit a crime which nature and reason detest.

If these reasons are powerful, the voice of paternal affection, which speaks from the bottom of his heart, is yet more so. It is difficult to conceive what must be the emotions of his breast, at the sight of a victim so dear and so precious. This is the fruit of his loins. He received him from heaven, by a miracle, in an advanced old age, and when the years of Sara no longer allowed him to encourage this hope. God had tried him by keeping him long in a state of suspense. He had solemnized the birth of this son by public marks of joy. He had abandoned Ishmael and his mother for the love he bare to him. He had brought him up with tender and anxious care. His soul was cemented to that of his son, and he saw himself living again in his person. Isaac, under the blessing of heaven, inherited the virtues of his father. Never was more respect and obedience discoverable than in this beloved son; and never did the affection of a tender father appear to be so just and so reasonable.

In fine, the soul of Abraham is occupied only with thoughts of his Isaac, and his heart is engaged only on schemes and projects of paternal love. He would have trembled at the least danger menacing the life of his son, were not his heart encouraged by reflecting on the promises of God. But he has no reason to apprehend that any accident will take from him a child whom heaven has miraculously given. He employs himself in returning thanks to God for a present which he values so highly; nor does he think he can sufficiently express his gratitude—when, suddenly, his ears are struck with these words: "*Abraham, take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.*"

If it is possible, brethren, only imagine the agitation and trembling of Abraham, on hearing these words, so extraordinary and so unexpected! And permit me, for a moment, to give utterance in your presence, to the heart of this patriarch. "Is it *I*," says he, "Am I *Abraham?* Is that the voice of my *God* which I have heard? Is it my *son* that it demands of me? What! my *son*, my son *Isaac*, my *only* son, my joy, my consolation—shall I see *thee* stretched upon a pile? shall I bind thee *myself*, and shall I imbrue my hands in thy blood? Is *this* the fruit of thy obedience, and of the tenderness I have had for thee? If it be necessary to make such a sacrifice, is there no other priest to be found for the task than myself? Can not my son die without being slain by the hand of his *father!* O, my son! must I mingle my tears with thy blood? Must I tear out my own bowels? *Is* it my God who gives the command? And *can* God command me to commit a crime? Is not Isaac the foundation of His promises? Is it not in Isaac that I am the father of many nations? Shall I immolate my son, who is a surety for the fidelity of my God, and a precious pledge of the truth of his promises? What will become of my faith? What will become of the glory of God whom I serve? Will not the nations have reason to blaspheme the name of that God?—That great and adorable name will be held in execration by all the people of the earth. O, if this should be the consequence, I would rather perish myself with my son! Let my God lanch His thunders upon this mountain, and let Him reduce me and my son to powder, rather than that my obedience should bring such dishonor upon His sacred name! I will renounce myself, O God, but I can not renounce the zeal that animates me for Thy glory! I will sacrifice my son to Thee, I will sacrifice myself; but I can not sacrifice Thine interests, which are dearer to me than my own life, and the life of my son! Thy *glory* restrains me! Thy *holy name* arrests me!—But have I forgotten that I am but dust and ashes, that I should speak thus to my Creator? His understanding is infinite, and mine is restricted. Isaac will receive death from the hand of his father, but was it not from the bosom of nothing and of death, that it pleased God to bring him into life? Was he not conceived in a womb which old age had already deadened? Is God less able to raise him from the tomb, than He was to draw him from nothing? Is it becoming in me to refuse my son to that great God, to whom I am indebted for whatever I am, and whatever I possess? If He will have the life of my son, is He not sufficiently powerful to take it? and am I strong enough to prevent Him?—No! no! I return from my wanderings. My faith can not be more enlightened than that of Him who gave it birth; nor do I know the interests of God better than God Himself. I will content myself with glorifying Him by my obedience. Since He has raised me above all men on the earth, by the blessings which He has conferred upon me, I must rise above the reasonings and common weaknesses of men, to do what He commands me. O God! I sacrifice to Thee my son, in spite of nature, and the blood that curdles round my heart! I immolate to Thee my joy and my hopes! It is my *heart* that I offer to Thee, upon this gloomy pile! My heart is the burnt-offering which I readily present to Thee, in spite of my weakness, and which I am about to slay!"

Thus we may suppose that Abraham spoke, while his arm was already stretched out to slay his son. His faith and zeal overcame every other sentiment. There were in Abraham two men, two understandings, two wills: the man of God and the natural man; the old man and the new man; the will of the flesh and the will of the

Spirit; reason and faith; the understanding of the man and the understanding of the believer. Two Abrahams combatted one against the other; but Divine and heavenly principles raise him far above those which are carnal and terrestrial. Grace triumphs over nature.

Abraham makes a double sacrifice to God: an exterior sacrifice upon the mountain, and an interior sacrifice in the secret of his soul. In the one he takes his son and binds him: in the other he immolates to God the sentiments of his soul. Outwardly, it is *Isaac* who is offered up; inwardly it is *Abraham* who suffers, and who sacrifices *himself.* Abraham ascends upon a mountain to finish the exterior sacrifice; the heart of Abraham rises above all the obstacles of the earth, above the weaknesses of flesh and blood, above temporal considerations; and ascends toward God to accomplish the interior sacrifice. The outward sacrifice is staid, only because the sacrifice within is completed. Isaac rises only after faith has immolated Abraham. O, my brethren, what greatness, what elevation! This is not alone to obtain a victory over the weakness of his heart; but also a triumph over the most legitimate feelings of nature. This is not merely to overcome doubt and unbelief; but it is to combat a reason which reposes upon the promises of God, and the assurance of faith. This is not a conflict of the affections of man with the glory and the interests of God; it is a conflict in which paternal tenderness, and human affection, unite themselves with the glory and the interests of the Deity.

Behold a sacrifice which includes all others! Behold a man who, by one oblation, immolates all things to God! He sacrifices to Him his wealth, which he desired only for the sake of Isaac; his joy, which depended upon the preservation of his son; his hopes, which rested upon him; his love and his tenderness, which were fixed upon this son; his very reason, which could not comprehend the meaning of this strange sacrifice. But he also sacrifices to Him something which appears to be more considerable, and which has commonly been dearer to the hearts of men. He immolates to Him a sentiment, to which we have seen the most illustrious men sacrifice all things. They have so ardently loved that glory and renown which accompany virtue, that they have renounced all other advantages to be able to boast that they possessed this. But behold a man, who, in obedience to the orders of heaven, rejects, despises, and, in a certain sense, tramples under foot that glory, that eclat, those fine names, those honorable titles which accompany virtue! He assumes the appearance of a criminal; he is willing to pass for a murderer—the murderer of *his own son!* It seems as if the love of God, which transports him, and the zeal which animates him, change the nature of things upon this mountain. Sin appears to be no more sin. Murder becomes legitimate, and crime demands praise! Why? because God alone is his authority. He sees none but God; he hears none but God; he recognizes neither vice nor virtue but in relation to God.

True elevation of an holy soul! Sublime impulse of a heart inspired with zeal for God! Human virtues are only efforts which we make to sacrifice our passions and self-love, that we may exalt ourselves—efforts which do not prevent us from returning again to ourselves. But Abraham goes out of himself, and rises indeed to God! Never did the Deity regard a sacrifice with so much pleasure —never did heaven behold so delightful a spectacle!

But yet this is not the greatest object which our faith discovers here. It is not the sacrifice of Abraham which demands our highest admiration. There is yet something remaining, more worthy of his attention and of ours. He is now upon mount Moriah; but let him only lift up his eyes, and he shall behold the mount of Calvary. His son will discover to him his Saviour. The arm which he has lifted up, will show him the arm of God raised against the victim of the human race; and he will find an adorable mystery which saves him, in that strange sacrifice which has excited all the tender feelings of his heart.

SECOND PART.—In fact, my brethren, the sacrifice of Abraham has been handed down to us, as a great and splendid type of the sacrifice of the cross. Abraham immolates his only son. God also sacrifices His only Son. You see on Moriah a murder in appearance, which conceals a sacrifice in effect. On the mount of Calvary you find an oblation, where you only thought you beheld an execrable murder. The victim of Abraham has received existence by a miracle; Isaac was conceived in the womb of a barren woman. The victim of God has come into the world by a birth yet more miraculous; Jesus Christ was conceived in the womb of a virgin. Isaac is represented to us as an innocent and submissive victim, who does not murmur even when his father stretches out his arm to sacrifice him. Jesus Christ was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners;" He was "led as a lamb to the slaughter." Abraham has already seized the knife, and is about to plunge it into the bosom of his son, without having lost any of the tenderness which he has always had for him. The Eternal Father lays His strokes upon His Son, who has ever been the object of His delight, and in whom He has always taken the highest pleasure. Isaac, the foundation of the promises of God, on whose life depended the hopes of the Church, and who seemed to include in himself all the benedictions of God, is about to be sacrificed upon a mountain, and even by the order of God. But what a wonder! Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Redeemer of Israel, He who must bring deliverance to Jacob, and who is only sent into the world to free him from his sins—that Jesus who, so to speak, holds in His hands all the graces and all the benedictions of heaven—is about to suffer death; and even by the eternal counsel of God!

Who is not surprised, also, at *this* event? Isaac, reviving, as it were, after his sacrifice, and in a certain sense arising from under the knife which his father had already suspended over him, leaves a posterity numerous as the stars of heaven, and as the sand on the seashore, in which are accomplished the promises and the oracles of God. Jesus Christ, really restored to life after the sacrifice of His body, and rising gloriously after His death, beholds an infinite number of His children and disciples who follow Him, and whom He renders partakers of all the graces, and of all the blessings of heaven; ac-according to that ancient prediction, "When thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand."

Behold the agreement which subsists between these two sacrifices, and which obliges us to consider one of these objects in the other, as in the most perfect type. But behold the difference which distinguishes them, and which discovers to us how much the image sinks below the original!

Go to Moriah, and you will find there a victim who follows the priest without knowing, at first, whither he is going, and who asks his father, "Where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" Turn your eye toward Calvary, and you will see Jesus Christ who exposes Himself voluntarily to the sword of His Father, and who, perfectly acquainted with His destiny, says to Him, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." *There* angels are sent from heaven to arrest the arm of Abraham; *Here* devils issue from hell to hasten the death of Jesus Christ. In the sacrifice of Isaac, the fire, the knife, the sacrificer are visible, but the victim does not at first appear. In the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the victim appears first, but the knife, which is the sword of Divine justice, and the fire, which consists in the ardor of His wrath and judgments, are invisible, are only seen by the eyes of faith. Upon the mountain of Moriah, Abraham sacrifices his son to his Master, to his Benefactor, to his Creator, to his God. Upon the mount of Calvary, God immolates *His* Son for the salvation of *men*, who are nothing but meanness, misery, and corruption. *There* Abraham renounces his blood and himself to obey a God who can amply reward him for his loss. *Here* God gives what He esteems the most precious to save men, who have not even the means of so much as expressing their gratitude, and who could not find it in their own bosoms to do it. *There* we see one who is but dust and ashes, making a sacrifice to God of what he received from Him. *Here* we see the Deity sacrificing the object of His eternal affection and delight—His treasure—His Son—for the salvation of dust and ashes. In fine, in the *one*, is a man who is sacrificed to God—in the *other*, is a God who is sacrificed for man.

Here flesh and blood must be silent, and cease to murmur. Abraham does infinitely less for God, than God had done for Abraham. He presents his son—he binds to slay him. But God had already slain His Son for the salvation of Abraham; for this, in the language of Scripture, is the "Lamb slain before the foundation of the world." Heaven has therefore prevented the earth. And does Abraham, then, exalt himself by this action? No; he remains profoundly abased before his Creator. Does he not attempt to justify himself before God? No; but he lays himself under new obligations. He receives all from God, when he seems to give up all to God; since the father and the son, the priest and the victim, have no real existence save in the regard that God already had to the sacrifice of the cross. Had not God already sacrificed His Son for the salvation of Abraham, Abraham would not have been in a condition to sacrifice his son to God. It is the efficacy of the blood which Jesus had shed, that gives strength to Abraham, to raise the arm that he may shed his own blood. The virtue and the zeal which are so illustriously displayed upon the mountain of Moriah, have their source and substance upon the mount of Calvary. Thus, my brethren, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is found in the sacrifice of Isaac; the sacrifice of Isaac in its accomplishment in its type, is found in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. From the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, proceed the strength and virtue which inspire Abraham; from the sacrifice of Abraham, proceeds the light which discovers the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. But both must be found in the sacrifice of our hearts, which is their legitimate and natural end. This is the third object of our meditation, with which we purpose to finish this discourse.

THIRD PART.—It is very proper that we should admire the two great objects which we have just set before you; but permit us to say that this admiration will be wholly useless, unless it be accompanied with the practice of those duties which these truths enforce upon us. The great point is, to draw from them those results which may influence our lives. We must now, therefore, dwell for a few moments, upon the sacrifice of ourselves. In effect, the words of our text oblige us to draw four conclusions. Abraham immolates to God his only-begotten son; we ought, then, to sacrifice to God whatever is most dear and precious to us. Abraham hears neither the murmurs nor opposition of flesh and blood; he does not even assign any of those reasons which seem so plausible, and which naturally strike the mind, to justify him in dispensing with the commandment of God. We ought, then, to renounce all those vain reasonings and pretexts, which flesh and blood employ, to prevent us from doing whatever God commands. Abraham loses no time. No sooner does he hear the voice of God directing him, than he sets out on his journey; and he binds his son immediately when he has reached the destined spot. We ought, then, to render to God a prompt obedience. We must not look behind, but we must glorify God in promptly sacrificing our vices. In fine, the holy patriarch neither trembles nor wavers when he is commanded to sacrifice his son; he stretches out his son, and seizes the knife. We ought not, then, to content ourselves with a few feeble and imperfect dispositions of a pious tendency, which we may feel within us. We must neither delay nor dissemble, nor lose our courage, when we are required to renounce our vices and to sacrifice our passions. Four truths with which our text furnishes us, for the instruction of our consciences; and upon which we shall do well to meditate.

1. It appears that the commandment which God gave to Abraham, was a mysterious commandment. In exacting this sublime effort of virtue from the father of the faithful, he seems to have described the kind of sacrifice which He should demand from believers in future times. Abraham was obliged to testify his faith by the sacrifice of his son; true believers, under the Gospel, are obliged to testify their faith by renouncing themselves. Jesus Christ, the teacher sent from God, instructs them that they must "hate their own souls" for His sake; that they must "pluck out their eyes and cut off their hands," to enter into the celestial kingdom to which He calls them. It is true these words are figurative; but they are not the less forcible on that account, since the Son of God considered this truth of so much importance, that He chose to employ the most lively expressions to render it intelligible.

But to confine ourselves to the ideas in our text, it is proper to remark that we all carry about with us an Isaac in our hearts; or rather, that there are *three* Isaacs in every one of us. There is an Isaac of sin; an Isaac of nature; and an Isaac of grace. The first we must every where, and at all times sacrifice to God; the second we are not called to immolate but in certain circumstances; and the third God requires that we always spare.

If you are anxious to know what is this Isaac of *sin*, ask your heart, what is the vice which it loves? It is that criminal pleasure which voluptuousness promises you. It is that cruel satisfaction which vengeance gives you. It is that malignant joy which the misfortunes of others produce in your hearts, and of which you dare not make a public avowal. It is whatever gives a relish to slander. It is that fatal and worldly joy which you derive from the human passions. It is the pleasure which avarice, pride, and ambition confer. It is, in fine, the fruit which you think that you derive from all the sins that you commit. Can we hesitate to sacrifice to God this Isaac of corruption, when we see Abraham offering up his Isaac —that Isaac the object of his tenderness—that Isaac whom he loves? Shall we love vice more than Abraham loved his son? If this patriarch binds an Isaac whom heaven had given him, shall we fear to sacrifice an Isaac which hell has placed in our hearts? Can we contemplate Abraham lifting up his arm to destroy the work of God, at the Divine command, and hesitate one moment about destroying the work of the devil, when God so often exhorts us to it? Abraham sacrifices an Isaac who is the foundation of all the promises of God. And shall not we put that Isaac to death, who is the foundation of all His threatenings? Abraham is going to slay him from whom must proceed salvation and blessings to the people. And shall not we sacrifice that idol, which engenders only misery and death?

And, my brethren, we must make a still greater sacrifice. We must sacrifice to God that Isaac of *nature*—that innocent Isaac whom we love without crime, but whom we can not refuse to God without ingratitude. There are three occasions on which God demands from you this sacrifice. They are the times of sickness; the season of adversity; and the day of death. In sickness we must sacrifice to God the complaints and murmurings of human nature; the hope of health which can never be re-established; the sight of friends which are about to be taken away from us. In adversity we must sacrifice to Him the good things which we justly possessed, and which we possess no more. Finally, in death, we must make a voluntary offering of all that we are to leave behind us. We must offer to God relations, friends, estates, riches, grandeur, the care of our children, the preservation of our families, father and mother, and whatever we possess. For, doubt not, my brethren, that we can make a present to God of things that we no longer possess. We can offer Him whatever we lose, without fearing that He will refuse it. We can sacrifice to Him things which are not in our power. This is the excellence and the wonderful advantage of religion.

We give to God whatever we cheerfully relinquish for His sake; and hence we place ourselves above the necessity which impels us. But this can only be done, by early acquiring an holy habitude of detaching ourselves from the world, and fixing our confidence upon the spiritual good which God has promised. This sacrifice must begin during life, and terminate at death. We must incessantly sacrifice ourselves to God; by submitting without complaint to the sacred orderings of Providence; by acquiescing in His good pleasure, in all things; and by humbly receiving the good and the evil, which in His widom He is pleased to dispense to us; being always in that disposition which led Job of old formerly to say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Finally, we must renounce our reason, our desires, and our feelings, when the renunciation of them is requisite to the advancement of His glory.

2. But perhaps you will say, How can we rise thus above ourselves? Are we Abrahams, that we should sacrifice ourselves to God? "Are we Abrahams!" And what matters it, my brethren, that we are not? Are we under less obligations to God than that ancient patriarch? Are our means of knowledge less than his? Abraham performs this action without an example; but we have the example of Abraham before our eyes. Abraham only knew the Deity through the mysterious shadows and vails with which He then covered Himself; but "We all with open face behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord." Abraham had no clear and distinct ideas of the salvation which we have obtained through the blood of our Lord; but we see the life, glory, and immortality which are brought to light by Jesus Christ.

Shall our zeal, then, grow colder, because grace "Hath appeared unto us?" Shall our gratitude diminish, because the heavens are opened to us? Shall we discover such weakness, because we are not solitary as Abraham was, but are "Encompassed with so great a cloud of witnesses" who encourage us by their example, and whom we have seen pass before us—martyrs for God in this career of blood and tears? Shall we no more sacrifice ourselves for God, since the Son of God has sacrificed Himself for us?

Or rather is there less necessity now to immolate to God our affections and vices, than Abraham formerly had to sacrifice his son? Is the Voice from heaven now silent which formerly spake to this patriarch? No, it speaks to us in a variety of ways, all clear and intelligible. Do you suppose that the oracle of Abraham does not address us? God speaks to us by the mouth of the prophets; He speaks to us by the eternal word. He speaks to us by the wounds of His Son, which are so many mouths to teach us our duty. He descends in tongues of fire upon the Apostles, to speak to us by their ministry. Every day He employs the voice of His servants to speak to our consciences; and instead of one command which He addressed formerly to Abraham, He addresses to you an infinity of exhortations, and reiterates, incessantly, in your ears, His command of death to sin, and renunciation of the world. How blind are we, my brethren, if we yet find it difficult to understand the will of this great God, who still speaks to us, and if we do not yet know that we must take up our cross and follow Him; that He calls us all to die, to hate ourselves, and to glorify Him by a prompt renunciation of the desires of the flesh, and the delights of sin!

My dear brethren, we are sufficiently acquainted with our duty; but the self-love and cupidity which enslave us, find a thousand pretexts to prevent us from rendering to God the obedience which we owe to Him. "I must sacrifice my resentments to God; I know it;"—we say in the recesses of our hearts—"but I am cruelly insulted; my honor is at stake." As if in making a sacrifice to God we must give up nothing! "I must relinquish this object of sensuality and mirth; but the inclination which draws me toward it is strong; I can not forsake it." "I must renounce the world; but I must also imitate its customs, and live as others." "I must follow the Saviour who proposes Himself as an example to us, that we should tread in His steps; but shall I oppose commonly received practices, and expose myself to the shafts of satire and of slander, by an unusual course of conduct?" Vain pretexts of flesh and blood! Ridiculous and miserable evasions of an heart possessed with the world and its vanities! Can you compare these empty reasonings with those specious and plausible pretexts which presented themselves to the mind of Abraham? Had he wished to dispense with the obligation of obeying his God, heaven and earth, nature and religion, furnished him with abundant excuses; but he despises every thing to obey promptly the voice of his God, who gives him the command.

The love of the world which is in us, and the habit which we cherish of warmly interesting ourselves in the affairs of this life, determine our minds to take the part of the world, and to seek for false reasons to dispense with banishing it from our hearts. But were we accustomed to the long and holy habit of loving our God more than all the objects of this life, as Abraham was, we should take the part of God against the world, without listening to the language of that impostor, who only makes use of our weakness, our hesitations, and our delays, to vanquish us.

3. If Abraham had indulged, at first, too much complaisance for the feelings of flesh and blood, and the tender movements of his heart, which pleaded with him in behalf of Isaac, he would have fallen from one degree of weakness to another, and the sight of his son would have caused the knife to drop from his hand: and then his purpose to obey God, and the efforts he had employed, would have been of no avail; since he must inevitably have been guilty of rebellion and disobedience in the sight of God. Thus, my brethren, let us beware that we cherish none of those cowardly weaknesses, or those criminal condescensions to our passions, which leave vice to live and reign in our hearts. Let us arm ourselves with a holy severity in this respect; and above all, let us hasten to profit by the good dispositions which God produces in our hearts, if it is true that we are to-day moved by that great object which now strikes our eyes. No hesitation! no delay!—to-day—at this hour—this moment, let us hear the voice of God, let us not harden our hearts! Let us imitate the holy patriarch in the fervor and promptitude of his zeal! Let us hasten to sacrifice to God our pride, our avarice, our voluptuousness, our ambition, our slander, our resentments, our doubts, our complainings!

O how pleasant an odor will this sacrifice send forth before God, who regards us to-day, and who perceives the bottom of our thoughts and hearts! O how will our souls be filled with consolation and joy, if, while we hear the voice of God, and faith transports us to the mount Moriah, we sacrifice ourselves to God by a sincere repentance, by a happy separation from whatever engages our affections and by a prompt renunciation of whatever charms our hearts!

4. Let us not fear to renounce whatever is dear to us; and be well assured that the depravity of our hearts is so great, that if we wish to know what are our most fatal attachments, we have only to examine what those are, which inspire us with most joy and pleasure. Sin, in almost every case, pleases us in proportion as it is danger-

ous; and we may say in almost every case that it is dangerous in proportion as it pleases us.

Do not, then, spare a vice because it is the delight of your heart. Abraham did not so reflect respecting Isaac; and why should you respecting sin? Whatever in your souls opposes itself to the glory of God, destroy it; annihilate it; sacrifice it to Him who demands it. Seize the victim! Grasp the knife! Boldly strike the blow! Expect not that heaven will send you angels to interrupt this sacrifice! They will be sent only to exhort you to finish it! And heaven, and this pulpit, will never address to you any other language!

To-day, then, "present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." And be certain that this happy annihilation of yourselves, will give birth to the most lively hopes. You will ascend toward God, while you sacrifice all things to His glory; and God will descend toward you, as He came in olden time to Abraham; and will say to you—"Now I know that thou fearest God!" To this great God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be honor, glory, majesty, and dominion, forever and ever! Amen.

DISCOURSE FIFTY-SECOND.

DANIEL DE SUPERVILLE.

SUPERVILLE was born at Anjou, in the month of August, 1657, and educated in the college at Saumur, and at Geneva. His first pastoral charge, of a little more than two years, was at Loudun, where he acquired so much reputation as to incur the malice of the enemies of Protestantism, who endeavored in vain, by bringing him to a trial for sedition, at Paris, to shake his faith. At the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, he fled to Holland and took up his residence at Rotterdam; where he continued to exercise the functions of a good minister of Jesus Christ, till prevented by the advance of age. He died the 9th of June, 1728.

Superville was ranked among the most eminent ministers of his day. His powers of argument and effective appeal were very great. His printed sermons were widely circulated, and generally passed rapidly through several editions, upon their appearance. The criticism of Doddridge is well known: "As to the French sermons, I never met with any of them that are to be compared with those of M. de Superville, the Protestant minister at Rotterdam. He especially excels in the beauty of his imagery, descriptions, and similies; and has some of the most pathetic expostulations I ever saw." A few of his sermons were translated into English, and published, many years ago, in London. In the French they fill four octavo volumes.

CHRIST THE ONLY WAY OF SALVATION.

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."—JOHN, xiv. 6.

Men are the subjects of three very ancient evils; sin, ignorance, and death. When I survey all the religions which have appeared in the world, all the sects of philosophers, all the arts which have been invented, to find remedies against these three evils, I seem to behold human nature in the situation of those diseased persons, who, among certain nations, used to be placed at the doors of their houses, that every passerby might contribute his advice or medicine for their cure. For want of skillful physicians, and a solid and regular practice, to which they were strangers, all were in the habit of prescribing for their neighbors, and each individual communicated the result of his own experience.

But what multitudes passed by us, and considered our maladies, before one was found able to cure them! Philosophers came with their pretended discoveries, their counsels and their precepts. They proposed to dissipate our gloom, and to restore us to happiness by reclaiming us to virtue. They gave us nothing but words. They wrote fine books, and made large promises to our wants, but were not able to relieve them. They called upon man to arise; and they gave him no strength to obey the exhortation. They called upon him to look; and they afforded him only a transient, glimmering light, insufficient for the discernment of objects. They dissuaded from the fear of Death; but they never disarmed him, or supplied any means of escaping from his power. The world with its policy and prudence, the arts it has invented, its power and protection, has never been able to effect more than a temporary oblivion of these evils. It has left them as great and incurable as ever. All the religions which appeared before Jesus Christ, were equally unsuccessful in their attempts to remedy them. Most of them established the dominion of ignorance and vice, instead of delivering from their power; and they vainly attempted to purify their votaries and appease the divinity, by their sacrifices, victims, and lustrations. Moses himself and the law which he promulgated, only declared— We are not "He that is to come; look ye for another!" They only made the patient more sensible of his disease and more ardently desirous of its cure.

At last Jesus Christ came, and with Him every thing came. Of Him may be truly affirmed what the philosopher caused to be falsely inscribed on his school. "Here is a remedy for all evils." Yes, Christians, in Him we find a remedy against sin, ignorance, and death; and in vain would you hope to find one, except in Him and His religion. He declares, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."

You must not expect us to say every thing that might be advanced on this comprehensive text. These few compendious words comprise all the glory of our Mediator, all the benefits He bestows upon us, all the advantages we derive from His alliance. And who could fully develop all these things in the short period allotted to this exercise? We shall only endeavor to exhibit the most essential and important lessons which the passage contains.

The text naturally divides itself into two propositions, very closely connected, and mutually explanatory of each other. The first shows what titles Jesus Christ assumes with reference to us. "I am," says He, "the way, and the truth, and the life." This we shall endeavor to elucidate in our first part. Then we shall examine the second proposition; which shows that this great Saviour, to the exclusion of every other, is our only conductor to the Father. "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." The explication and proof of this important truth will form our second part.

I. To develop and elucidate the meaning of these magnificent words, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life," we shall do two things. First, we shall consider the three appellations generally, and shall offer some useful remarks on the union, extent, and force, of the three connected together. Then we shall consider them separately, and, as far as we can, shall exhibit the meaning, beauty, and truth, of each of these glorious titles.

Our first observation must relate to the occasion of this discourse. Jesus Christ was about to leave His disciples. All the grief and terror which the fear of a melancholy desertion could excite in the mind, the Apostles felt; and amid the trouble into which sorrow had plunged them, they no longer knew what they said, or remembered things with which they ought to have been most deeply impressed. He had spoken of his absence as a journey on which he was going to prepare a place for them, after which he would come to them again. Upon this, Thomas said: "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?" Jesus replied: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." You say that you know not the way to follow Me, and I am Myself the way by which you must go to the Father; a way that you ought to know, and it is unnecessary to seek for another. "Because I have said these things to you, sorrow hath filled your heart." But if "ye believe in God, believe also in Me." "I am the truth." Confide in My promises; "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself." You fear the world and its persecutions; My approaching death terrifies you; and you tremble for yourselves. "I am the life." I will come again; I shall rise from the dead on the third day. "Because I live, ye shall live also." He that loseth his life for My sake, shall find it again in Me and by Me. For by Me is the only way of access to the glory of the Father. This is the general sense and scope of the whole text.

Secondly, whether you take these expressions separately, or join them together and consider them as exemplifying a figure very common in the style of the Scriptures, as well as of profane authors—by which "the way, the truth, and the life" will be understood as denoting the true way to life, or the way which leads to life, or the true and living way—in every form, the proposition is true, and the sense just and certain. To affirm separately, that Jesus Christ is the way, that He is the truth, that He is the life, or conjointly to affirm that He is the true way to life, is equally correct.

Thirdly.—That the language of Jesus Christ is evidently figurative, can not be doubted. Here you perceive how very familiar and common the use of figurative terms was with Him, even when he was conversing with His dearest disciples with a view to their instruction and consolation. Such modes of expression serve to convey an idea with more vividness and power, and in fewer words, than could be done by simple terms. There is something at once far more concise and energetic in Jesus's calling Himself "the way, the truth, and the life," than if He had simply described Himself as the guide to Heaven, the teacher of truth, and the giver of life.

Fourthly, let us observe, that in order to a correct explication of these titles which the Saviour assumes, they must be applied to Him in one and the same point of view. He is "the truth and the life," in the same character in which He is "the way." He is the way, considered as Mediator, God and Man, who not only has united in His person two natures infinitely different, but by the actions of His ministry has reconciled heaven and earth. When He says, in the next clause, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me," He speaks of Himself as Mediator. It is in this character, therefore, that He also considers Himself when He says, "I am the truth and the life." Though it may be truly affirmed that He is "the truth and the life," essentially and of Himself; eternal truth, uncreated wisdom, original life, necessarily existing, without beginning and without end, who gives to all things whatever they have of subsistence, life and motion: yet it appears evident to me, that this is not what He intends to assert in this place; but that He contemplates rather what He is with relation to us, than what He is in Himself by His divine nature; in a word, that He speaks of Himself as Mediator.

It must also be remarked, that though this description exhibits Jesus Christ in the capacity of Mediator, yet the titles and qualities here mentioned are such as no mere man could ever arrogate to himself. It could never be said of any mere man, that he is the truth and the life, that He is the source of those qualities, or possesses them in a supreme degree.

No one of the Evangelists gives us so sublime a representation of Jesus Christ and His divinity, as John. He has carefully collected certain discourses of the Son of God which are altogether divine; and taking the language of the Saviour as his model, he adopts, both in his gospel and his epistles, whenever he speaks of the Lord Jesus, a style peculiar to himself. Yes, my brethren, in these words, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life," we must acknowledge the voice of God, and not of man. What man ever spake like this Man? Do you not perceive in His language a character of greatness, which confirms what we believe, that the Lord Jesus is both God and Man in one person? "I am," he says: that is, "I am He who is, and who was, and who is to come:" who *is* the way, who *was* the expected truth, and who *will be* the life to all the faithful. When men say, *I am;* if they mean to do justice, they will say, with Abraham, "I am but dust and ashes;" with David, "I am a stranger and a sojourner, as all my fathers were;" with Peter, "I am a sinful man." This is all that man can boast of in himself. He is mere dust, weakness, death; but Jesus Christ is "the life." Man is a traveler who has lost his road; but Jesus Christ is "the way." Man is ignorance and error; but Jesus Christ is "the truth."

These words also exhibit a character of greatness, inasmuch as Jesus Christ is not afraid of declaring openly and freely what He is. Men in general wish others to say what they are, in preference to saying it themselves, from a fear that none will believe them. Their vanity is fond of concealing itself under the appearances of an ingenuous and delicate humility from which their pride hopes to derive some new advantage. False modesty! which endeavors to steal the esteem of mankind by external deceptions. But Jesus Christ seeks not these stratagems. He is above our weakness and fears, and the artifice of our self-love. The ancient heathens deemed it a noble sincerity, characteristic of true heroes, to profess ingenously what they thought of themselves. It is far more interesting to the salvation of men, that Jesus Christ dissembles not what He is, but declares His glory and His benefits. Therefore, without any circumlocution, He affirms on this occasion, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life."

Lastly, we must not forget to remark what a great difference there is between the titles claimed or accepted by men, and those which are assumed by Jesus Christ. The titles of men have many faults; the three following are very common.

In the first place, they are marks of weakness of mind, of vanity and pride, rather than proofs of true glory and virtue. One is denominated Good, another Magnificent, August, Merciful, Bold, Wise, Just, Great. But even in cases where the persons honored with any of these fine names, are not wholly destitute of some correspondent virtues, those virtues are so small that all we can consider such titles as implying is, that in certain individuals there is a little good and much evil, little virtue and great pride.

In the second place, is it not a great fault in men to prefer titles which express power and greatness to those which indicate goodness and usefulness? Yet nothing is more common. Intoxicated with a false idea of glory, they scarcely ever make it consist in virtues that are peaceable, useful, beneficent, adopted to promote the public repose. The surnames of Great, Conqueror, and Invincible are more acceptable to them than those of Good, Just, and Father of the people.

In the last place, so far are these surnames from presenting an idea of any good, that most of them have no foundation but in great evils. Nothing less than the infliction of calamity upon some provinces, and the ruin of many thousands of families, is necessary to constitute a claim to the title of *Conqueror*. Thus one has been named *Poliorcetes*, or a Taker of Cities; another *Asiaticus*, or *Africanus*, from the country which submitted to his arms, or was the scene of his warlike achievements; another *The Great*, or *The Victorious.*

Proud mortals, efface all your titles! Jesus Christ is the only one who deserves to wear them! In Him all names are inferior to the realities! He is the only being who possesses perfections without mixture or shade! whose glory is in harmony with the happiness of all! whose virtues are great in themselves and beneficial to mankind! Thus it is with relation to us, and in the capacity of our Mediator and Head, that He here denominates Himself "the way, and the truth, and the life."

From these general remarks let us proceed to a more particular examination of each of these expressions by itself. Jesus Christ is "the way to the Father." Is He so, simply because He teaches by His doctrine what we ought to believe and to practice? One interpreter refers not only this first title, but the others also, exclusively to the *doctrine* of Christ, and tells us that our Lord often affirms of His person what properly belongs to His doctrine, and that He employs substantives instead of adjectives. But we consider this interpreter as weakening the force of the terms, and diminishing the glory of our Saviour, who is in Himself "the way to the Father," not only by His doctrine but by His merit: not only as our prophet, but as our priest.

First, then, I observe that Jesus Christ is "the way," beyond all doubt, by His doctrine and His precepts. By the revelation of His Gospel, He has taught us what we ought to believe concerning God, and what we "must do to be saved." But this sense is far from reaching all the extent of the expression—"I am the way." It must be added, in the second place, that beside doctrines, precepts, and promises, Christ has also given us examples. His actions have marked out a road in which we ought to walk. He has "left us an example, that we should follow His steps." This sense, however, still fails of exhausting all the force of the Saviour's language. In the third place, He is "the way" by his merit: and this is certainly what He principally intended here, where He was evidently speaking of his death. Reflect, my brethren, on the state of sin in which were, and which caused a separation between God and us. Reflect on the distance between sinful man and a righteous God: and if you inquire how sinners may draw nigh to God, listen to Jesus Christ, who informs you, "I am the way." He reopens the communication between God and man, as we shall see more at large in the sequel of our discourse. His merit alone has appeased Divine justice. Without Him we should have no right to communion with God. He is also the channel by which our prayers, and acts of piety, ascend to God, and the gifts of God descend to us.

The second expression, "I am the truth," in like manner, possesses considerable force. Its meaning is equally noble and just. It signifies, in the first place, that our Lord is eminently *true*, "the faithful and true witness;" true in His promises and threatenings; true in His oracles; true in His doctrine and the mysteries He has revealed. Placed in opposition to all men, Jesus Christ is the infallible teacher. He "came into the world to bear witness unto the truth." His "word is truth."

But not only is He the great teacher of truth, He is *the truth itself*; because in His person and in His office of Mediator, He is the object of our knowledge, the end of the law, and the center of religion. As God and Man united, as God manifest in the flesh, He is the truth of the oracles—which He verified; the truth of the promises—which He fulfilled; the truth of the figures—of which He was the archetype; the truth of the ceremonies and of the whole law—of which He was the end. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Without Him we could know but little of the justice and mercy of God, the extent of His perfections, the secrets of His providence. Without Him, the fall of man, the permission of sin, the preservation of a sinful world, the choice of the Jewish people among all nations while all others were abandoned, and the miracles wrought in favor of that nation, would be enigmas impossible to be deciphered.

How much might be said on this part of the subject, if we had time to dwell upon it! The heathens complained *that truth was hidden in a well.* In Jesus Christ it has emerged from its concealment. He has "revealed things" which were in the bosom of the Father, which "eye" had "not seen, nor ear heard, neither" had "entered into the heart of man." He is Himself the principal subject of all revelation: Him the prophets announced before He came; Him the apostles preached after His appearance. "This is life eternal," to "know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." Let us further observe, that He is the source of all revelation, not only by the things which He Himself taught in addition to the light of nature and the institutes of Moses, but also by those which the apostles taught after Him. For by the Spirit whom He sent, were discovered to them the secrets of the Father. What He delivered He drew from His own stores; and it was from His stores that the Holy Spirit drew those communications with which He inspired the apostles. "Therefore," said Jesus, "He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you."

The third title, "I am the life," is not inferior to the other two, we may affirm that each of the titles which Christ assumes, and this among them, has an infinity of meaning: but I shall confine myself to the following summary. He is "the life" in opposition to three kinds of death, spiritual death or a death in sin, corporeal death, and eternal death. In opposition to spiritual death "Christ is our life," because after having justified us by His blood, He raises us to newness of life by the grace of His Spirit. He sanctifies and makes us new creatures; He quickens us, and enables us to walk in the paths of righteousness; He nourishes and confirms us, and leads us from strength to strength. He is the author, principle, and source of our spiritual life, by the merit of His death, the precepts of His word, and the energy of the Spirit. In opposition to corporeal death, "Christ is our life," because He will raise our bodies from the dust. "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." He reigns over our tombs and will one day command the earth to give up her dead. "I know that my

Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold." Lastly, in opposition to eternal death, "Christ is our life," because He has delivered us from hell, merited heaven and procured eternal life, into the possession of which He will solemnly introduce us after the resurrection, when He will say, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you."

I can not refrain from remarking further, that in the term "life" there is a twofold opposition to all other religions, and to their authors. Every where, except in Jesus Christ, you find nothing but *death* and a *curse.* Death in paganism whose very gods were mortal; death in human traditions; death even in the law of Moses, which condemned for the violation of a single point. But the religion of Christ exhibits *truth* and *life.* Compare Christ with all other founders of religions. Which of them has received the keys of the tomb? Which of them has asserted an empire over death? Have they given life to their followers? Have they raised one person from the dead? Ah! so far from giving life to others, they could not preserve their own! The Zoroasters, the Orpheuses, the Numas, the Mahammeds are dead; they are neither *life* nor *living.* How long have dust and worms evinced the fraud of these impostors, and their dry bones admonished mankind: "Mortals, expect not from us the life which you seek!" Moses is dead, and his sepulcher is not less real because it is concealed. But do you doubt whether Christ is "the life?" He is risen again, and ascended into heaven! "He was dead, but is alive again; and behold He is alive for evermore!" Death and the grave will confess that their bonds were too feeble to detain "the Prince of Life." Enough has been said to evince our Saviour to be "the way, the truth, and the life."

But why does not Jesus content Himself with assuming one title? Why does He accumulate three? His design is to exhibit Himself as our all; our *way* in which we ought to walk, our *truth* to enlighten our path, our *life* to quicken us, to sustain in our journey, and to crown us at the end. He connects the three titles, because He can not be divested of three qualities. And without possessing them, He could never bestow upon us a full and complete salvation. Without *truth,* He could not be our way to *life.* If He were not our *way,* He would cease to be our *truth* and our *life.* If He were not able to give me *life,* I should no longer regard Him as my *way* and my *truth.*

You all know that under the law there were three classes of leaders; kings at the head of the state, priests at the head of the Church, and prophets who, on some extraordinary occasions, reformed both the Church and the state. But Jesus Christ with great advantage sustains all these characters. The kings, far from being "the way and the truth," often caused the people to err, being themselves led astray by their idolatries or vices. The priests also did not always "keep knowledge;" and their priesthood was only a shadow of that of Christ. The prophets always spoke of an obscure futurity; they scarcely showed the truth but as concealed, and delivered by degrees an imperfect revelation. "God spake by them at sundry times and in divers manners." But Jesus Christ, a king always true, good, and powerful; an eternal priest, always "able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him;" a Prophet always endued with the Spirit without measure, the original source of light, possessing truth of Himself and in His own stores; was, is, and ever will be, "the way, and the truth, and the life" to all the faithful. The patriarchs had no other. Christ is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." "Abraham saw his day and was glad." The prophets knew no other: "to Him" they all "gave witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him, shall receive remission of sins." The Apostles taught no other; they desired "to know none but Jesus Christ." We need no other; for "it hath pleased the Father, that in Him should all fullness dwell; and of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace." No other can supply our necessities. He Himself declares that "no man cometh to the Father but by Him." This is to form our second part.

II. What the Son of God had asserted in a figurative manner in the first proposition, He expresses more literally in the second. He extends and reasserts it, to the exclusion of every other: I am the only way; there is no other to go to the Father: I am the only truth; it can not be found out of Me: I am the only life; no one can be made a partaker of the life to come, but by Me. You perceive at once the universality of the proposition: "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me:" there is no other way of salvation for the Jew or the Gentile, for the learned or the ignorant. Jesus Christ might be "the way, the truth, and the life;" yet it might not necessarily be concluded that there was no other way: it might be asked, Can not all this be found in others? Hear His answer: "I am the door: and all that ever came before Me, all that enter not by Me, are thieves and robbers: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." "I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness: whosoever believeth" not "on Me abideth in darkness." "He that gathereth not with Me, scattereth abroad."—"I AM THE WAY:" "without Me ye can do nothing." "I AM THE TRUTH:" "every one that is of the truth, heareth My voice." "I AM THE LIFE:" "he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:" "he that believeth not, shall not see life; he is condemned already." These declarations both confirm and illustrate the truth contained in our text.

But for its further explanation let us observe that "to come to the Father" signifies in general, to have communion with God, to approach Him in the ways of religion, to be united to Him by grace and by glory. "To come to the Father," is to know Him as He chooses to be known, to believe in Him, and to pay Him acceptable services. "To come to the Father," is to be reconciled to God, and in consequence of that reconciliation, to approach Him with confidence, by acts of faith, love, and piety. Lastly, "to come to the Father," is to enter into His glory, to partake of His blessedness. "He that cometh to God," says the Apostle, "must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." And the solemn words with which Jesus Christ will introduce us into His glory, will be, "Come ye blessed of My Father." So when the Saviour says, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me;" He means to exhibit Himself as the only medium by which it is possible to have saving communion with God, either in grace or in glory.

In proof of this great and important truth, we remark that Jesus Christ is the only one who has removed the obstacles which on the part of God opposed our reunion to Him.

The first obstacle was that of immutable justice and the state into which we had fallen by sin. God is necessarily just, and we were deserving of punishment. God is the supreme Governor of the world and the Preserver of order; we were violators of order and natural rectitude. How could the Lord leave guilt unpunished, and make a rebellious creature happy; "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" It seems to have been the sentiment of all nations, that a sinner must perish, or find some means of appeasing the Divinity, some way of expiating sin, and satisfying the claims of violated Majesty. God also, who can not fortify an error, appears to have confirmed this sentiment by commanding the Israelites to offer sacrifices. But what proportion exists between the sacrifice of animals or even of men, and the majesty of the Supreme

Being offended by a creature; between the blood of slaughtered victims and injury done to the divine laws. Vain are all ablutions, and lustrations; they could never cleanse our stains. Reason, natural revelation, the precepts of philosophy, even the religion of Moses, offered nothing sufficient to reconcile us to God, supplied no efficacious way of satisfying Divine justice. Jesus Christ was that way; He removed this obstacle. "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Him."

On this subject the Scriptures teach us three truths. The first is, that our Mediator really satisfied for us, appeased the Divinity, merited our reconciliation. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." "He is our peace, having made peace through the blood of His cross." Him "God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood: In whom we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins." The second truth is that it is only Jesus Christ who has done this, who has satisfied for us. The glory is not divided. He "hath trodden the wine press alone, and of the people there was none with Him." "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. St. Paul clearly proves that "the grace of God is by one man, Jesus Christ;" and that "as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one," by one justifying righteousness, "the free gift came upon all men to justification of life." The same Apostle also proves it to be by the "one sacrifice" of Christ, by His "one offering," that we are purified and sanctified, and by His intercession alone that we obtain a place among the saints. Lastly, on this head, the Scripture not only informs us that Jesus Christ has satisfied by His death, and that He has made satisfaction alone, but it also assures us that by no other being could satisfaction ever have been made.

I conclude this from the manner in which the Apostles in almost every page extol the great, the infinite mercy of God in sending His Son and giving Him up to die. They never would have held such language if there had been other ways of appeasing Divine justice and effecting the salvation of men; if what Jesus Christ has done, could have been performed by other mediators. Consider brethren; there has never been another individual in the world, who was a man without being a sinner; who could discharge the debts of others without being burdened with any debt of His own; who by His death could offer a sacrifice proportioned to the dignity of the party offended, and the dignity of whose person could render the punishment of one equivalent to that of many; who could suffer without perishing and sinking under His sufferings. He, and He only, could transfer to Himself the punishments of others—without injustice to others, because He is independent and Master of Himself—without injustice to Himself, because He had power to rise again and return from death. From all this you will conclude that "no one cometh to the Father, but by Jesus Christ," because He, and He only, is in fact our Mediator and Surety; He and He only could reconcile us to God by His death.

Come, then, ye authors of other religions, come and plead your claims in opposition to the Author of ours! Where were you when He gave His blood for the ransom of the world? Where were you when He struggled alone with justice, when alone He sustained the strokes of Divine vengeance? What works have you performed, that we should believe in you? What have you done for man? Your object has been to flatter him, instead of healing his maladies. You have wished to receive every thing from the Deity, and to make Him no return. Where is your sacrifice? Where is your victim? Ah! you are unable to restore to me God whom I have lost by sin: you can not bring me back to God, from whom my heart has been alienated by fear.

The second obstacle which kept us at a distance from God, was our dread of Him and His tremendous justice: but Christ has also removed this obstacle to our approach, this cause of our flight from the Supreme Judge, arising from uncertainty, distrust, and fear. Jesus has given us a certain hope of pardon, has announced it by explicit promises, and shown us the foundations on which it rests. He has banished our distrust and annihilated our fears, by the assurance of His "having made peace by the blood of His cross." He declares that God, instead of being our enemy, is become our friend, that he is willing to readmit us to the enjoyment of His love and all the blessings which that love includes. By these declarations terrified man is encouraged, his conscience is tranquilized, and he approaches God with confidence. Since it is in Jesus Christ and by Him alone, that God reveals Himself propitious to sinners; since it is He alone that enables us to contemplate the Deity sitting on a throne of grace, to which He gives us access by His merit and intercession; it is certain that "no man cometh to the Father but by Him."

The third thing necessary to bring us near to God, was to change our hearts, to make us holy, to detach us from excessive love of the creatures; in order, on the one hand, that the holiness of God might not oppose our admission to His communion, and on the other, that our hearts might no longer be alienated from God by propensities to sin. This is a point which false religions had scarcely ever contemplated, wholly ignorant of the depth of human corruption, or thinking of it only to flatter it, and forming no just ideas of an All-perfect Being. But Jesus Christ changes the heart of the man whom He deigns to bring to God: He annihilates the moral distance between a holy God and a corrupt heart; first, by the precepts of His word, and the motives He presents to induce us to love God and despise the world; secondly, by His example which He proposes to our imitation; thirdly, by His Spirit which mortifies the old man and forms the new man within us. No religion ever delivered precepts on the love of God so certain and complete as His; no one ever furnished motives so powerful, to excite us to follow its laws: still further have any others been from giving a perfect example for our direction. Jesus Christ alone has been able to impart a miraculous power to gain the hearts; that Holy Spirit which draws us to God, and forms the peculiar character of His religion; that Spirit the fruit of His merit and intercession, which He sent down immediately after His ascension to heaven, and without which it is impossible to please God. This justifies the conclusion that "no man cometh to the Father, but by Jesus Christ."

We proceed to another proof. It is only by Jesus Christ that our prayers can be acceptable to God; He is our only Advocate and Intercessor with the Father. This is a truth, astonishing to tell! opposed by multitudes. All Christians acknowledge Jesus Christ to be our only Mediator in redemption; but the Roman Catholics pretend that we may have many mediators in intercession. They maintain that those intercessors obtain favor for us with God, not only by their prayers, but also by their merits. How then does Jesus affirm that "no man cometh to the Father but by Him?" How does St. John say, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins?" Why speak of *an* advocate, if there are many, though different? His design in that passage is to comfort the faithful who fall into any sin. If the doctrine of Rome were true, would He not say that there are many advocates with God; that beside Jesus Christ who is the principal, there are as many protectors and intercessors as there are saints both male and female? On the contrary, St. John exhibits only one source of comfort and confidence, "Jesus Christ the righteous." Here is the foundation of the office He exercises for us. He is our advocate, because He is "the righteous," innocent in Himself, and our true righteousness who justifies us, and satisfies on our behalf. The Apostle adds, that "He is the propitiation for our sins." His propitiation is the ground of the second act of His priesthood, which is intercession. I remark then, as Jesus Christ alone has made expiation for our crimes, so it is He only, who, having no claims on Himself, is qualified to intercede for us with the Father, in an official character, with authority, and with all needful success. "No man cometh to the Father, but by Him."

So many proofs united establish our proposition beyond all doubt. Jesus Christ alone has satisfied for us, and appeased God; He alone has rendered Deity propitious, accessable, favorable; He alone possesses the Spirit of grace to communicate to us from His Father; He alone has taken away our alienations of heart from God; He alone has appeared in the presence of God and intercedes for us, with justice, authority, and efficacy. We will add, He alone will come to deliver us from death, as we have already shown you under our first head. "No man cometh to the Father, but by Him."

To conclude, let us first pity the erroneous, and fortify our faith against error. Let us pity and mourn over the blind Jew, who still seeks salvation in a dead law, and rejects Him who is "the truth and the life." Let us also deplore the unhappy state of many nations, who, far from our Jesus, the only source of spiritual light and life, are languishing in darkness and in the shadow of death. Let us, above all, detest the impiety of those persons who, under the pretence of exalting the goodness of God, assert that salvation may be obtained in all kinds of religions, provided men acknowledge a Supreme Being. These people seem to have the same notion as Tamerlane, the famous Conqueror, who is said to have readily tolerated all sects and all diversities of faith, alleging that God resembles a great prince who likes a variety of officers and services. But this is a sentiment unworthy of God, and presents an idea truly ridiculous. He is uniform, simple in His ways. Truth is one, and nothing is more contrary to revelation than these notions.

Christians, our beloved is One alone! Let us never associate with Him any companion, in our worship or in our hearts. Let us love Him exclusively, in preference to every other. "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Him." None but the High Priest could offer that exquisite perfume, the composition of which is so carefully prescribed. None but the High Priest could enter into the most holy place. Jesus is the true Joseph, of whom alone the

Father hath said, "Go unto Joseph; what He saith to you, do: without Him shall no man lift up his hand or his foot in all the land."

Let us adhere to this great Saviour! How firmly men attach themselves to a patron of known goodness and established credit, especially when no other can be found capable of affording full protection! Let us follow Him by practicing His religion and obeying His truth! Let us not, like the Israelites, grow weary in the way. Be of good courage, Christian travelers! Let us follow Him who is "the way, and the truth, and the life." "He that followeth *Him* shall not walk in darkness." "He that believeth in *Him*, though he were dead, yet shall he live." Yes, Jesus is "the life." You know it, ye happy spirits, who are exalted to sit with Him on His throne; and we shall one day know it too! We know it already, by faith, and hope; and soon we shall know it by enjoyment and glory! God grant us all this grace! Amen.

DISCOURSE FIFTY-THIRD.

JOHN BAPTIST MASSILLON.

The Whitefield of the French pulpit, as Massillon has been styled, was born, of obscure parentage, at Hieres, in Provence, in the year 1662. In his studies he bestowed special attention upon sacred eloquence; and was soon called to preach in the pulpits of Paris, where he attracted the livelist admiration, thrilling his hearers "as by the shocks of a spiritual electricity." In 1718 he was presented with the Bishopric of Clermont, and died on the 28th of September, 1742.

Massillon is one of the "unapproachable triumvirate" of the French pulpit orators. There are those who consider him foremost among them all. Certainly he was excelled by none in many points of lofty, persuasive eloquence. His style is that of simple elegance combined with wondrous strength and vigor. The peculiarities of his sermonizing are great clearness of thought, perfect sobriety of judgment, tender emotions, melting pathos, novelty of illustration, copiousness of language, and unerring taste and skill.

When Baron, the great actor, heard him, he said to a companion, "My friend, here is an orator; as for us, we are but actors." But the best feature of his pulpit productions, was their deep religious spirit, and their earnestness and faithfulness, in dealing with the consciences of his hearers. His discourses are pervaded with that *onction*, that mild magic, that tender and affecting manner, that gentle fascination, that endearing simplicity which allures and wins, and renders lovely the religion of the blessed Gospel. His eloquence goes right into the soul, and without lacerating it, penetrates, and convinces, and subdues. It was the "*Grand Monarch*" who said to him: "Father, I have heard many great orators in this chapel, and have been highly pleased with them; but with you, whenever I hear you, I go away displeased with myself, for I see my own character." Some of Massillon's sermons have been translated, but it is to be regretted that the rendering was not more free and graceful. That which is here given is the one most celebrated. When drawing near to the close, and uttering one of his overwhelming sentences, the whole congregation started to their feet, and interrupted the preacher by their murmurs and exclamations of terror and despair. It is proper to add that while the translation above referred to is the basis of that here given, it has been necessary to recast many of the sentences, and greatly modify the general rendering. It is believed that the sermon, as here given, retains somewhat of the freedom, ease, and vivacity which it bore as it fell from the great orator's lips.

THE SMALL NUMBER OF THE SAVED.

"And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian."—Luke, iv. 27.

Every day, my brethren, you continue to ask of us, whether the road to heaven is really so difficult, and the number of the saved really so small as we represent? To a question so often proposed, and still oftener resolved, our Saviour answers you here, that there were many widows in Israel afflicted with famine; but the widow of Sarepta was alone found worthy the succor of the prophet Elias; that the number of lepers was great in Israel in the time of the prophet Eliseus; and that Naaman was only cured by the man of God.

Were I here, my brethren, for the purpose of alarming, rather than instructing you, I had need only to recapitulate what in the holy writings we find dreadful with regard to this great truth; and, running over the history of the just, from age to age, show you that, in all times, the number of the saved has been very small. The family of Noah alone saved from the general flood; Abraham chosen from among men to be the sole depositary of the covenant with God; Joshua and Caleb the only two of six hundred thousand Hebrews who saw the Land of Promise; Job the only upright man in the Land of Uz—Lot, in Sodom. To representations so alarming, would have succeeded the sayings of the prophets. In Isaiah you would see the elect as rare as the grapes which are found after the vintage, and have escaped the search of the gatherer; as rare as the blades which remain by chance in the field, and have escaped the scythe of the mower. The Evangelist would still have added new traits to the terrors of these images. I might have spoken to you of two roads—of which one is narrow, rugged, and the path of a very small number; the other broad, open, and strewed with flowers, and almost the general path of men: that every where, in the holy writings, the multitude is always spoken of as forming the party of the reprobate; while the saved, compared with the rest of mankind, form only a small flock, scarcely perceptible to the sight. I would have left you in fears with regard to your salvation; always cruel to those who have not renounced faith and every hope of being among the saved. But what would it serve to limit the fruits of this instruction to the single point of setting forth how few persons will be saved? Alas! I would make the danger known, without instructing you how to avoid it; I would show you, with the prophet, the sword of the wrath of God suspended over your heads, without assisting you to escape the threatened blow; I would alarm but not instruct the sinner.

My intention is, therefore, to-day, to search for the cause of this small number, in our morals and manner of life. As every one flatters himself he will not be excluded, it is of importance to examine if his confidence be well founded. I wish not, in marking to you the causes which render salvation so rare, to make you generally conclude that few will be saved, but to bring you to ask yourselves if, living as you live, *you* can hope to be saved. Who am I? What am I doing for heaven? And what can be my hopes in eternity? I propose no other order in a matter of such importance. What are the causes which render salvation so rare? I mean to point out three principal causes, which is the only arrangement of this discourse. Art, and far-sought reasonings, would here be ill-timed. O attend, therefore, be ye whom ye may! No subject can be more worthy your attention, since it goes to inform you what may be the hopes of your eternal destiny.

Part I.—Few are saved, because in that number we can only comprehend two descriptions of persons:—either those who have been so happy as to preserve their innocence pure and undefiled, or those who, after having lost, have regained it by penitence. This is the first cause. There are only these two ways of salvation: heaven is only open to the innocent or to the penitent. Now, of which party are you? Are you innocent? Are you penitent?

Nothing unclean shall enter the kingdom of God. We must consequently carry there either an innocence unsullied, or an innocence regained. Now to die innocent, is a grace to which few souls can aspire: and to live penitent, is a mercy which the relaxed state of our morals renders equally rare. Who, indeed, will pretend to salvation by the claim of innocence? Where are the pure souls in whom sin has never dwelt, and who have preserved to the end the sacred treasure of grace confided to them by baptism, and which our Saviour will redemand at the awful day of punishment?

In those happy days when the whole Church was still but an assembly of saints, it was very uncommon to find an instance of a believer, who, after having received the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and acknowledged Jesus Christ in the sacrament which regenerates us, fell back to his former irregularities of life. Ananias and Sapphira, were the only prevaricators in the Church of Jerusalem; that of Corinth had only one incestuous sinner. Church-penitence was then a remedy almost unknown; and scarcely was there found among these true Israelites one single leper whom they were obliged to drive from the holy altar, and separate from communion with his brethren. But, since that time the number of the upright diminishes, in proportion as that of believers increases. It would appear that the world, pretending now to have become almost generally Christian, has brought with it into the Church its corruptions and its maxims.

Alas! we all go astray, almost from the breast of our mothers! The first use which we make of our heart is a crime; our first desires are passions; and our reason only expands and increases on the wrecks ef our innocence. The earth, says a prophet, is infected by the corruption of those who inhabit it: all have violated the laws, changed the ordinances, and broken the alliance which should have endured forever: all commit sin, and scarcely is there one to be found who does the work of the Lord. Injustice, calumny, lying, treachery, adultery, and the blackest crimes have deluged the earth. The brother lays snares for his brother; the father is divided from his children; the husband from his wife: there is no tie which a vile interest does not sever. Good faith and probity are no longer virtues except among the simple people. Animosities are endless; reconciliations are feints, and never is a former enemy regarded as a brother: they tear, they devour each other. Assemblies are no longer but for the purpose of public and general censure. The purest virtue is no longer a protection from the malignity of tongues. Gaming is become either a trade, a fraud, or a fury. Repasts—those innocent ties of society—degenerate into excesses of which we dare not speak. Our age witnesses horrors with which our forefathers were unacquainted.

Behold, then, already one path of salvation shut to the generality of men. All have erred. Be ye whom you may who listen to me now, the time has been when sin reigned over you. Age may perhaps have calmed your passions, but what was your youth? Long and habitual infirmities may perhaps have disgusted you with the world; but what use did you formerly make of the vigor of health? A sudden inspiration of grace may have turned your heart, but do you not most fervently entreat that every moment prior to that inspiration may be effaced from the remembrance of the Lord.

But with what am I taking up time? We are all sinners, O my God! and Thou knowest our hearts! What we know of our errors, is, perhaps, in Thy sight, the most pardonable; and we all allow, that by innocence we have no claim to salvation. There remains, therefore, only one resource, which is penitence. After our shipwreck, say the saints, it is the timely plank which alone can conduct us into port; there is no other means of salvation for us. Be ye whom you may, prince or subject, high or low, penitence alone can save you. Now permit me to ask—Where are the penitent? You will find more, says a holy father, who have never fallen, than who, after their fall, have raised themselves by true repentance. This is a terrible saying; but do not let us carry things too far: the truth is sufficiently dreadful without adding new terrors to it by vain declamation.

Let us only examine as to whether the majority of us have a right, through penitence, to salvation. What is a penitent? According to Tertullian, a penitent is a believer who feels every moment his former unhappiness in forsaking and losing his God. One who has his guilt incessantly before his eyes; who finds every where the traces and remembrance of it.

A penitent is a man intrusted by God with judgment against himself; one who refuses himself the most innocent pleasures because he had formerly indulged in those the most criminal; one who puts up with the most necessary gratification with pain; one who regards his body as an enemy whom it is necessary to conquer—as an unclean vessel which must be purified—as an unfaithful debtor of whom it is proper to exact to the last farthing. A penitent regards himself as a criminal condemned to death, because he is no longer worthy of life. In the loss of riches or health, he sees only a withdrawal of favors that he had formerly abused: in the humiliations which happen to him, only the pains of his guilt: in the agonies with which he is racked, only the commencement of those punishments he has justly merited. Such is a penitent.

But I again ask you—Where, among us, are penitents of this description? Now look around you. I do not tell you to judge your brethen, but to examine what are the manners and morals of those who surround you. Nor do I speak of those open and avowed sinners who have thrown off even the appearance of virtue. I speak only of those who, like yourselves, live as most live, and whose actions present nothing to the public view particularly shameful or depraved. They are sinners, and they admit it: you are not innocent, and you confess it. Now are they penitent? or are you? Age, avocation, more serious employments, may perhaps have checked the sallies of youth. Even the bitterness which the Almighty has made attendant on our passions, the deceits, the treacheries of the world, an injured fortune, with ruined constitution, may have cooled the ardor, and confined the irregular desires of your hearts. Crimes may have disgusted you even with sin itself—for passions gradually extinguish themselves. Time, and the natural inconstancy of the heart will bring these about; yet, nevertheless, though detached from sin by incapability, you are no nearer your God. According to the world you are become more prudent, more regular, to a greater extent what it calls men of probity, more exact in fulfilling your public or private duties. But you are not penitent. You have ceased from your disorders, but you have not expiated them. You are not converted: this great stroke, this grand operation on the heart, which regenerates man, has not yet been felt by you. Nevertheless, this situation, so truly dangerous, does not alarm you. Sins which have never been washed away by sincere repentance, and consequently never obliterated from the book of life, appear in your eyes as no longer existing; and you will tranquilly leave this world in a state of impenitence, so much the more dangerous as you will die without being sensible of your danger.

What I say here, is not merely a rash expression, or an emotion of zeal; nothing is more real, or more exactly true: it is the situation of almost all men, even the wisest and most esteemed of the world. The morality of the younger stages of life is always lax, if not licentious. Age, disgust, and establishment for life, fix the heart, and withdraw it from debauchery: but where are those who are converted? Where are those who expiate their crimes by tears of sorrow and true repentance? Where are those who, having begun as sinners, end as penitents? Show me, in your manner of living, the smallest trace of penitence! Are your graspings at wealth and power, your anxieties to attain the favor of the great (and by these means an increase of employments and influence)—are these proofs of it? Would you wish to reckon even your crimes as virtues?—that the sufferings of your ambition, pride, and avarice, should discharge you from an obligation which they themselves have imposed? You are penitent to the world, but are you so to Jesus

Christ? The infirmities with which God afflicts you, the enemies He raised up against you, the disgraces and losses with which He tries you—do you receive them all as you ought, with humble submission to His will? or, rather, far from finding in them occasions of penitence, do you not turn them into the objects of new crimes? It is the duty of an innocent soul to receive with submission the chastisements of the Almighty; to discharge, with courage, the painful duties of the station allotted to him, and to be faithful to the laws of the Gospel—but do sinners owe nothing beyond this? And yet they pretend to salvation! Upon what claim? To say that you are innocent before God, your own consciences will witness against you. To endeavor to persuade yourselves that you are penitent, you dare not; and you would condemn yourselves by your own mouths. Upon *what*, then, dost thou depend, O man! who thus livest so tranquil?

And what renders it still more dreadful is that, acting in this manner you only follow the current; your morals are the morals of well-nigh all men. You may, perhaps, be acquainted with some still more guilty (for I suppose you to have still remaining some sentiments of religion, and regard for your salvation), but do you know any real penitents? I am afraid we must search the deserts and solitudes for them. You possibly may mention, among persons of rank and worldly custom, a small number whose morals and mode of life, more austere and guarded than the generality, attract the attention, and very likely the censure of the public. But all the rest walk in the uniform path. I see clearly that every one comforts himself by the example of his neighbor: that, in that point, children succeed to the false security of their fathers; that none live innocent, that none die penitent: I see it, and I cry, O God! if Thou hast not deceived us; if all Thou hast told us with regard to the road to eternal life shall be strictly fulfilled, if the number of those who must perish shall not influence Thee to abate from the severity of Thy laws—what will become of that immense multitude of creatures which every hour disappears from the face of the earth? Where are our friends, our relations who have gone before us? and what is their lot in the eternal regions of the dead? What shall we ourselves become?

When formerly a prophet complained to the Lord that all Israel had forsaken His protection, He replied that seven thousand still remained who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Behold the number of pure and faithful souls which a whole kingdom then contained! But couldst Thou still, O, my God! comfort the anguish of Thy servants to-day by the same assurance! I know that Thine eye discerns still some upright among us; that the priesthood has still its Phineases; the magistracy its Samuels; the sword its Joshuas; the court its Daniels, its Esthers, and its Davids: for the world only exists for Thy chosen, and all would perish were the number accomplished. But those happy remnants of the children of Israel who shall inherit salvation—what are they, compared to the grains of sand in the sea; I mean, to that number of sinners who fight for their own destruction? Come you after this, my brethren, to inquire if it be true that few shall be saved? Thou hast said it, O, my God! and hence it is a truth which shall endure forever.

But, even admitting that the Almighty had not spoken thus, I would wish, in the second place, to review, for an instant, what passes among men:—the laws by which they are governed; the maxims by which the multitude is regulated: this is the second cause of the paucity of the saved; and, properly speaking, is only a development of the first—the force of habit and customs.

PART II.—Few people are saved, because the maxims most universally received in all countries, and upon which depend, in general, the morals of the multitude, are incompatible with salvation. The rules laid down, approved, and authorized by the world with regard to the application of wealth, the love of glory, Christian moderation, and the duties of offices and conditions, are directly opposed to those of the evangelists, and consequently can lead only to death. I shall not, at present, enter into a detail too extended for a discourse, and too little serious, perhaps, for Christians.

I need not tell you that this is an established custom in the world, to allow the liberty of proportioning expenses to rank and wealth; and, provided it is a patrimony we inherit from our ancestors, we may distinguish ourselves by the use of it, without restraint to our luxury, or without regard, in our profusion, to any thing but our pride and caprice.

But Christian moderation has its rules. We are not the absolute masters of our riches; nor are we entitled to abuse what the Almighty has bestowed upon us for better purposes. Above all, while thousands of unfortunate wretches languish in poverty, whatever we make use of beyond the wants and necessary expenses of our station, is an inhumanity and a theft from the poor. "These are refinements of devotion," they say. "And, in matters of expense and profusion, nothing is excessive or blamable, according to the world, but what may tend to derange the fortune." I need not tell you that it is an approved custom to decide our lots, and to regulate our choice of professions or situations in life, by the order of our birth, or the interests of fortune. But, O my God! does the ministry of Thy Gospel derive its source from the worldly considerations of a carnal birth? "We can not fix every thing," says the world, "and it would be melancholy to see persons of rank and birth in avocations unworthy of their dignity. If born to a name distinguished in the world, you must get forward by dint of intrigue, meanness, and expense: make fortune your idol: that ambition, however much condemned by the laws of the Gospel, is only a sentiment worthy your name and birth: you are of a sex and rank which introduce you to the gayeties of the world: you can not but do as others do: you must frequent all the public places, where those of your age and rank assemble: enter into the same pleasures: pass your days in the same frivolities, and expose yourself to the same dangers: these are the received maxims, and you are not made to reform them." *Such is the doctrine of the world!*

Now, permit me to ask you here, who confirms you in these ways? By what rule are they justified to your mind? Who authorizes you in this dissipation, which is neither agreeable to the title you have received by baptism, nor perhaps to those you hold from your ancestors? Who authorizes those public pleasures, which you only think innocent because your soul, already too familiarized with sin, feels no longer the dangerous impressions or tendency of them? Who authorizes you to lead an effeminate and sensual life, without virtue, sufferance, or any religious exercise?—to live like a stranger in the midst of your own family, disdaining to inform yourself with regard to the morals of those dependent upon you?—through an affected state, to be ignorant whether they believe in the same God; whether they fulfill the duties of the religion you profess? Who authorizes you in maxims so little Christian? Is it the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Is it the doctrine of the Apostles and saints? For surely some rule is necessary to assure us that we are in safety. What is yours? "*Custom:*" *that* is the only reply you can make! "We see none around us but what conduct themselves in the same way, and by the same rule. Entering into the world, we find the manners already established: our fathers lived thus, and from them we copy our customs: the wisest conform to them: an individual can not be wiser than the whole world, and must not pretend to make himself singular, by acting contrary to the general voice." Such, my brethren, are your only comforters against all the terrors of religion! None act up to the law. The public example is the only guaranty of our morals. We never reflect that, as the Holy Spirit says, the laws of the people are vain: that our Saviour has left us rules, in which neither times, ages, nor customs, can ever authorize the smallest change: that the heavens and the earth shall pass away, that customs and manners shall change, but that the Divine laws will everlastingly be the same.

We content ourselves with looking around us. We do not reflect that what, at present, we call *custom*, would, in former times, before the morals of Christians became degenerated, have been regarded as monstrous singularities; and, if corruption has gained since that period, these vices, though they have lost their singularity, have not lost their guilt. We do not reflect that we shall be judged by the Gospel, and not by custom; by the examples of the holy, and not by men's opinions;—that the habits, which are only established among believers by the relaxation of faith, are abuses we are to lament, not examples we are to follow;—that, in changing the manners, they have not changed our duties;—that the common and general example which authorizes them, only proves that virtue is rare, but not that profligacy is permitted;—in a word, that piety and a real Christian life are too repulsive to our depraved nature ever to be practiced by the majority of men.

Come now, and say that you only do as others do. It is exactly by that you condemn yourselves. What! the most terrible certainty of your condemnation shall become the only motive for your confidence! Which, according to the Scriptures, is the road that conducts to death? Is it not that which the majority pursue? Which is the party of the reprobate? Is it not the multitude? You do nothing but what others do! But thus, in the time of Noah, perished all who were buried under the waters of the deluge: all who, in the time of Nebuchadnezzar, prostrated themselves before the golden calf: all who, in the time of Elijah, bowed the knee to Baal; all who, in the time of Eleazer, abandoned the law of their fathers. You only do what others do! But that is precisely what the Scriptures forbid. "Do not," say they, "conform yourselves to this corrupted age." Now, the corrupted age means not the small number of the just, whom you endeavor not to imitate; it means the multitude whom you follow. You only do what others do! You will consequently experience the same lot. "Misery to thee" (cried formerly St. Augustine), "fatal torrent of human customs! Wilt thou never suspend thy course! Wilt thou, to the end, draw the children of Adam into thine immense and terrible abyss!"

In place of saying to ourselves, "What are my hopes? In the

Church of Jesus Christ there are two roads; one broad and open, by which almost the whole world passes, and which leads to death; the other narrow, where few indeed enter, and which conducts to life eternal; in which of these am I? Are my morals those which are common to persons of my rank, age, and situation in life? Am I with the great number? Then I am not in the right path. I am losing myself. The great number in every station is not the party saved" not far from reasoning in *this* manner, we say to ourselves, "I am not in a worse state than others! Those of my rank and age live as I do! Why should I not live like them?" *Why*, my dear hearers? For that very reason! The general mode of living can not be that of a Christian life. In all ages, the holy have been remarkable and singular men. Their manners were always different from those of the world; and they have only been saints because their lives had no similarity to those of the rest of mankind. In the time of Esdras, in spite of the defense against it, the custom prevailed of intermarrying with strange women: this abuse became general: the priests and the people no longer made any scruple of it. But what did this holy restorer of the law? Did he follow the example of his brethren? Did he believe that guilt, in becoming general, became more legitimate? No: he recalled the people to a sense of the abuse. He took the book of the law in his hand, and explained it to the affrighted people—corrected the custom by the truth.

Follow, from age to age, the history of the just; and see if Lot conformed himself to the habits of Sodom, or if nothing distinguished him from the other inhabitants; if Abraham lived like the rest of his age; if Job resembled the other princes of his nation; if Esther conducted herself, in the court of Ahasuerus like the other women of that prince; if many widows in Israel resembled Judith; if, among the children of the captivity, it is not said of Tobias alone that he copied not the conduct of his brethren, and that he even fled from the danger of their commerce and society. See, if in those happy ages, when Christians were all saints, they did not shine like stars in the midst of the corrupted nations; and if they served not as a spectacle to angels and men, by the singularity of their lives and manners. If the pagans did not reproach them for their retirement, and shunning of all public theaters, places, and pleasures. If they did not complain that the Christians affected to distinguish themselves in every thing from their fellow-citizens; to form a separate people in the midst of the people; to have their particular laws and customs; and if a man from their side embraced the party of the Christians, they did not consider him as forever lost to their pleasures, assemblies, and customs. In a word, see, if in all ages the saints whose lives and actions have been transmitted down to us, have resembled the rest of mankind.

You will perhaps tell us that all these are singularities and exceptions, rather than rules which the world is obliged to follow. They are exceptions, it is true: but the reason is, that the general rule is to reject salvation; that a religious and pious soul in the midst of the world is always a singularity approaching to a miracle. The whole world, you say, is not obliged to follow these examples. But is not piety alike the duty of all? To be saved, must we not be holy? Must heaven, with difficulty and sufferance, be gained by some, and by others with ease? Have you any other Gospel to follow? Any other duties to fulfill? Any other promises to hope for, than those of the Holy Bible? Ah! since there was another way more easy to arrive at salvation, wherefore—ye pious Christians, who at this moment enjoy the kingdom gained with toil, and at the expense of your blood—did ye leave us examples so dangerous and vain? Wherefore have ye opened for us a road, rugged, disagreeable, and calculated to repress our ardor, seeing there was another you could have pointed out more easy, and more likely to attract us, by facilitating our progress? Great God! how little does mankind consult reason in the point of eternal salvation!

Will you console yourselves, after this, with the *multitude*, as if the greatness of the *number* could render the guilt unpunished, and the Almighty durst not condemn all those who live like you? What are all creatures in the sight of God? Did the multitude of the guilty prevent Him from destroying all flesh at the deluge? from making fire from heaven descend upon the five iniquitous cities? from burying, in the waters of the Red Sea, Pharaoh and all his army? from striking with death all who murmured in the desert? Ah! the kings of the earth may reckon upon the number of the guilty, because the punishment becomes impossible, or at least difficult, when the fault is become general. But God, who, as Job says, wipes the impious from off the face of the earth, as one wipes the dust from off a garment—God, in whose sight all people and nations are as if they were not—numbers not the guilty. He has regard only to the crimes; and all that the weak and miserable sinner can expect from his unhappy accomplices, is to have them as companions in his misery.

So few are saved, because the maxims most universally adopted are maxims of sin. So few are saved, because the maxims and duties most universally unknown, or rejected, are those most indispensable to salvation. This is the last reflection, which is indeed nothing more than the proof and the development of the former ones.

What are the engagements of the holy vocation to which we have all been called? The solemn promises of baptism. What have we promised at baptism? To renounce the world, the devil, and the flesh. These are our vows. This is the situation of the Christian. These are the essential conditions of our covenant with God, by which eternal life has been promised to us. These truths appear familiar, and destined for the common people; but it is a mistake. Nothing can be more sublime; and, alas! nothing is more generally unknown! It is in the courts of kings, and to the princes of the earth, that without ceasing we ought to announce them. Alas! they are well instructed in all the affairs of the world, while the first principles of Christian morality are frequently more unknown to them than to humble and simple hearts!

At your baptism, then, you have renounced *the world.* It is a promise you have made to God, before the holy altar; the Church has been the guarantee and depository of it; and you have only been admitted into the number of believers, and marked with the indefeasible seal of salvation, upon the faith that you have sworn to the Lord, to love neither the world, nor what the world loves. Had you then answered, what you now repeat every day, that you find not the world so black and pernicious as we say; that, after all, it may innocently be loved; and that we only decry it so much because we do not know it; and since you are to live in the world you wish to live like those who are in it—had you answered thus, the Church would not have received you into its bosom; would not have connected you with the hope of Christians, nor joined you in communion with those who have overcome the world. She would have advised you to go and live with those unbelievers who know not our Saviour. For this reason it was, that in former ages, those of the Catechumen, who could not prevail upon themselves to renounce the world and its pleasures, put off their baptism till death; and durst not approach the holy altar, to contract, by the sacrament, which regenerates us, engagements of which they knew the importance and sanctity; and to fulfill which they felt themselves still unqualified.

You are therefore required, by the most sacred of all vows, to hate the world; that is to say, not to conform yourselves to it. If you love it, if you follow its pleasures and customs, you are not only, as St. John says, the enemy of God, but you likewise renounce the faith given in baptism; you abjure the Gospel of Jesus Christ; you are an apostate from religion, and trample under foot the most sacred and irrevocable vows that man can make.

Now, what is this world which you ought to hate? I have only to answer that it is the one you love. You will never mistake it by this mark. This world is a society of sinners, whose desires, fears, hopes, cares, projects, joys, and chagrins, no longer turn but upon the successes or misfortunes of this life. This world is an assemblage of people who look upon the earth as their country; the time to come as an exilement; the promises of faith as a dream; and death as the greatest of all misfortunes. This world is a temporal kingdom, where our Saviour is unknown; where those acquainted with His name, glorify Him not as their Lord, hate His maxims, despise His followers, and neglect or insult Him in His sacraments and worship. In a word, to give a proper idea at once of this world, it is the vast multitude. Behold the world which you ought to shun, hate, and war against by your example!

Now, is this your situation in regard to the world? Are its pleasures a fatigue to you? Do its excesses afflict you? Do you regret the length of your pilgrimage here? Or on the contrary, are not its laws your laws; its maxims your maxims? What it condemns, do you not condemn? What it approves do you not approve? And should it happen, that you alone were left upon the earth, may we not say that the corrupt world would be revived in you; and that you would leave an exact model of it to your posterity? When I say you, I mean, and I address myself to almost all men.

Where are those who sincerely renounce the pleasures, habits, maxims, and hopes of this world? We find many who complain of it, and accuse it of injustice, ingratitude, and caprice; who speak warmly of its abuses and errors. But in decrying, they continue to love and follow it; they can not bring themselves to do without it. In complaining of its injustice, they are only piqued at it, they are not undeceived. They feel its hard treatment, but they are unacquainted with its dangers. They censure, but where are those who hate it? And now my brethren, you may judge if many can have a claim to salvation.

In the second place, you have renounced *the flesh* at your baptism; that is to say, you are engaged not to live according to the sensual appetites; to regard even indolence and effeminacy as crimes; not to flatter the corrupt desires of the flesh; but to chastise, crush, and crucify it. This is not an acquired perfection; it is a vow: it is the first of all duties; the character of a true Christian and inseparable from faith. In a word, you have anathematized Satan and all his works. And what are his works? That which composes almost the thread and end of your life; pomp, pleasure, luxury, and dissipation; lying, of which he is the father; pride, of which he is the model; jealousy and contrition, of which he is the artisan.

But I ask you, where are those who have not withdrawn the anathema they had pronounced against Satan? Now, consequently (to mention it as we go along), behold many of the questions answered! You continually demand of us, if theaters, and other public places of amusement, be innocent recreations for Christians? In return, I have only one question to ask you: Are they the works of Satan or of Jesus Christ? for there can be no medium in religion. I do not mean to say that there are not many recreations and amusements which may be termed indifferent. But the most indifferent pleasures which religion allows, and which the weakness of our nature renders even necessary, belong, in one sense, to Jesus Christ, by the facility with which they ought to enable us to apply ourselves to more holy and more serious duties. Every thing we do, every thing we rejoice or weep at, ought to be of such a nature as to have a connection with Jesus Christ, and to be done for his glory.

Now, upon this principle—the most incontestable, and most universally allowed in Christian morality—you have only to decide whether you can connect the glory of Jesus Christ with the pleasures of a theater. Can our Saviour have any part in such a species of recreation? And before you enter them, can you, with confidence, declare to Him that, in so doing, you only propose His glory, and to enjoy the satisfaction of pleasing Him! *What!* the theaters, such as they are at present, still more criminal by the public licentiousness of those unfortunate creatures who appear on them than by the impure and passionate scenes they represent—the theaters works of JESUS CHRIST! Jesus Christ would animate a mouth, from whence are to proceed lacivious words, adapted to corrupt the heart! But these blasphemies strike me with horror. Jesus Christ would preside in assemblies of sin, where every thing we hear weakens His doctrines! where the poison enters into the soul through all the senses! where every art is employed to inspire, awaken, and justify the passions He condemns! Now, says Tertullian, if they are not the works of Jesus Christ, they must be the works of Satan. Every Christian, therefore, ought to abstain from them. When he partakes of them, he violates the vows of baptism. However innocent he may flatter himself to be, in bringing from these places an untainted heart, it is sullied by being there; since by his presence alone he has participated in the works of Satan, which he had renounced at baptism, and violated the most sacred promises he had made to Jesus Christ and to His Church.

These, my brethren, as I have already told you, are not merely advices and pious arts; they are the most essential of our obligations. But, alas! who fulfills them? Who even knows them? Ah! my brethren, did you know how far the title you bear, of Christian, engages you; could you comprehend the sanctity of your state; the hatred of the world, of yourself, and of every thing which is not of God, that it enjoins that Gospel life, that constant watching, that guard over the passions, in a word, that conformity with Jesus Christ crucified, which it exacts of you—could you comprehend it, could you remember that as you ought to love God with all your heart, and all your strength, a single desire that has not connection with Him defiles you—you would appear a monster in your own sight. How! you would exclaim. Duties so holy, and morals so profane! A vigilance so continual, and a life so careless and dissipated! A love of God so pure, so complete, so universal, and a heart the continual prey of a thousand impulses, either foreign or criminal! If thus it is, who, O my God! will be entitled to salvation? Few indeed, I fear, my dear hearers! At least it will not be *you* (unless a change takes place), nor those who resemble you; it will not be the multitude!

Who *shall* be saved? Those who work out their salvation with fear and trembling; who live in the world without indulging in its vices. Who shall be saved? That Christian woman, who, shut up in the circle of her domestic duties, rears up her children in faith and in piety; divides her heart only between her Saviour and her husband; is adorned with delicacy and modesty; sits not down in the assemblies of vanity; makes not a law of the ridiculous customs of the world, but regulates those customs by the law of God; and makes virtue appear more amiable by her rank and her example. Who shall be saved? That believer, who, in the relaxation of modern times, imitates the manners of the first Christians—whose hands are clean, and his heart pure—who is watchful—who hath not lift up his soul to vanity—but who, in the midst of the dangers of the great world, continually applies himself to purify it; just—who swears not deceitfully against his neighbor, nor is indebted to fraudulent ways for the innocent aggrandizement of his fortune; generous—who with benefits repays the enemy who sought his ruin; sincere—who sacrifices not the truth to a vile interest, and knows not the part of rendering himself agreeable, by betraying his conscience; charitable—who makes his house and interest the refuge of his fellow-creatures, and himself the consolation of the afflicted; regards his wealth as the property of the poor; humble in affliction—a Christian under injuries, and penitent even in prosperity. *Who* will merit salvation? You, my dear hearer, if you will follow these examples; for such are the souls to be saved. Now these assuredly do not form the greatest number. While you continue, therefore, to live like the multitude, it is a striking proof that you disregard your salvation.

These, my brethren, are truths which should make us tremble! nor are they those vague ones which are told to all men, and which none apply to themselves. Perhaps there is not in this assembly an individual who may not say of himself, "I live like the great number; like those of my rank, age, and situation; I am lost, should I die in this path." Now, can any thing be more capable of alarming a soul, in whom some remains of care for his salvation still exist? It is the multitude, nevertheless, who tremble not. There is only a small number of the just who work out severally their salvation, with fear and trembling. All the rest are tranquil. After having lived with the multitude, they flatter themselves they shall be particularized at death. Every one augurs favorably for himself, and vainly imagines that he shall be an exception.

On this account it is, my brethren, that I confine myself to you who are now here assembled. I include not the rest of men; but consider you as alone existing on the earth. The idea which fills and terrifies me, is this—I figure to myself the present as your last hour, and the end of the world! the heavens opening above your heads—the Saviour, in all His glory, about to appear in the midst of His temple—you only assembled here as trembling criminals, to wait His coming, and hear the sentence, either of life eternal, or everlasting death! for it is vain to flatter yourselves that you shall die more innocent than you are at this hour. All those desires of change with which you are amused, will continue to amuse you till death arrives. The experience of all ages proves it. The only difference you have to expect, will most likely be only a larger balance against you than what you would have to answer for now; and from what would be your destiny, were you to be judged this moment, you may almost decide upon what it will be at death. Now, I ask you—and, connecting my own lot with yours, I ask it with dread—were Jesus Christ to appear in this temple, in the midst of this assembly, to judge us, to make the awful separation between the sheep and the goats, do you believe that the most of us would be placed at

His right hand? Do you believe that the number would at least be equal? Do you believe that there would even be found *ten* upright and faithful servants of the Lord, when formerly *five cities* could not furnish that number? I ask you! You know not! I know it not! Thou alone, O my God! knowest who belong to Thee.

But if we know not who belong to Him, at least we know that *sinners* do not. Now, who are the just and faithful assembled here at present? Titles and dignities avail nothing; you are stripped of all these in the presence of your Saviour! Who are they? Many sinners who wish not to be converted; many more who wish, but always put it off; many others who are only converted in appearance, and again fall back to their former course; in a word, a great number, who flatter themselves they have no occasion for conversion. This is the party of the reprobate! Ah! my brethren, cut off from this assembly these four classes of sinners, for they will be cut off at the great day! And now stand forth ye righteous:—where are ye? O God! where are Thine elect! What remains as Thy portion!

My brethren, our ruin is almost certain! Yet we think not of it! If in this terrible separation, which will one day take place, there should be but *one* sinner in the assembly on the side of the reprobate, and a voice from heaven should assure us of it, without particularizing him, who of us would not tremble, lest *he* should be the unfortunate and devoted wretch? Who of us would not immediately apply to his conscience, to examine if its crimes merited not this punishment? Who of us, seized with dread, would not demand of our Saviour, as did the Apostles, crying out, "Lord, is it I?" And should a small respite be allowed to our prayers, who of us would not use every effort, by tears, supplication, and sincere repentance, to avert the misfortune?

Are we in our senses, my dear hearers? Perhaps among all who listen to me now, ten righteous ones would not be found. It may be fewer still. What do I perceive, O my God! I dare not, with a fixed eye, regard the depths of Thy judgments and justice! Not more than *one*, perhaps, would be found among us all! And this danger affects you not, my dear hearer! You persuade yourself that in this great number who shall perish, you will be the happy individual! You, who have less reason, perhaps, than any other to believe it! You, upon whom alone the sentence of death should fall, were only one of all who hear me to suffer! Great God! how little are the terrors of Thy law known to the world? In all ages, the just have shuddered with dread, in reflecting on the severity and extent of Thy judgments, touching the destinies of men! Alas! what are they laying up in store for the sons of men!

But what are we to conclude from these awful truths? That all must despair of salvation? God forbid! The impious alone, to quiet his own feelings in his debaucheries, endeavors to persuade himself that all men shall perish as well as he. This idea ought not to be the fruit of the present discourse. It is intended to undeceive you with regard to the general error, that any one may do whatever is done by others. To convince you that, in order to merit salvation, you must distinguish yourself from the rest; that in the midst of the world you are to live for God's glory, and not follow after the multitude.

When the Jews were led in captivity from Judea to Babylon, a little before they quitted their own country, the prophet Jeremiah, whom the Lord had forbid to leave Jerusalem, spoke thus to them: "Children of Israel, when you shall arrive at Babylon, you will behold the inhabitants of that country, who carry upon their shoulders gods of silver and gold. All the people will prostrate themselves, and adore them. But you, far from allowing yourselves, by these examples, to be led to impiety, say to yourselves in secret, It is Thou, O Lord! whom we ought to adore."

Let me now finish, by addressing to you the same words.

At your departure from this temple, you go to enter into another Babylon. You go to see idols of gold and silver, before which all men prostrate themselves. You go to regain the vain objects of human passions, wealth, glory, and pleasure, which are the gods of this world, and which almost all men adore. You will see those abuses which all the world permits, those errors which custom authorizes, and those debaucheries, which an infamous fashion has almost constituted as laws. Then, my dear hearer, if you wish to be of the small number of true Israelites, say, in the secrecy of your heart, "It is Thou alone, O my God! whom we ought to adore. I wish not to have connection with a people which know Thee not; I will have no other law than Thy holy law; the gods which this foolish multitude adores, are not gods: they are the work of the hands of men; they will perish with them: Thou alone, O my God! are immortal; and Thou alone deservest to be adored. The customs of Babylon have no connection with the holy laws of Jerusalem. I will continue to worship Thee with that small number of the children of Abraham which still, in the midst of an infidel nation, composes Thy people; with them I will turn all my desires toward the holy Zion. The singularity of my manners will be regarded as a weakness; but blessed weakness, O my God! which will give me strength to resist the torrent of customs, and the seduction of example. Thou wilt be my God in the midst of Babylon, as Thou wilt one day be in Jerusalem above!"

"Ah! the time of the captivity will at last expire. Thou wilt call to Thy remembrance Abraham and David. Thou wilt deliver Thy people. Thou wilt transport us to the holy city. Then wilt Thou alone reign over Israel, and over the nations which at present know Thee not. All being destroyed, all the empires of the earth, all the monuments of human pride annihilated, and Thou alone remaining eternal, we then shall know that Thou art the Lord of hosts, and the only God to be adored!

Behold the fruit which you ought to reap from this discourse! Live apart. Think, without ceasing, that the great number work their own destruction. Regard as nothing all customs of the earth, unless authorized by the law of God, and remember that holy men in all ages have been looked upon as a peculiar people.

It is thus that, after distinguishing yourselves from the sinful on earth, you will be gloriously distinguished from them in eternity!

Now, to God the Father, etc.

DISCOURSE FIFTY-FOURTH.

JAMES SAURIN.

This eminent Protestant divine was born at Nismes, in the year 1677, and went with his pious father into exile, to Geneva, after the repeal of the Edict of Nantes. When seventeen years of age he left his studies and became a cadet in the army; but in a few years he returned to the study of Philosophy and Divinity; and in the year 1705 was chosen pastor at the Hague, where he acquired great celebrity as a preacher, and where, also, his career was terminated by death in the year 1730.

Saurin possessed vast intellectual powers, and an imagination that has rarely been equaled. He was less artificial, and more careless and inelegant, than the three great Catholic preachers, but not less effective. It has been said that his utterances were like torrents of fire, and their immediate influence often equal to their character. His sermons were published in twelve volumes; and the Rev. Robert Robinson, by translating a large number of them into English (published in England in six volumes, in this country in two), immortalized his own name and that of the preacher whom he so fairly and gracefully introduced to English readers. Perhaps no translation ever retained more faithfully the spirit of the original. Indeed the sermons have lost nothing by a change of language. Saurin will always be read for his weighty doctrinal instruction, and his pure, unaffected, and eloquent style. A distinguished Theological Professor has pronounced the discourse which follows Saurin's masterpiece, and, in point of structure and composition, equal to almost any sermon in any language.

THE NATURE AND CONTROL OF THE PASSIONS.

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."—1 Peter, ii. 1.

The words you have heard, my brethren, offer four subjects of meditation to your minds. First, the nature of the passions—secondly, the disorders of them—thirdly, the remedies to be applied—and lastly, the motives that engage us to subdue them. In the first place we will give you a general idea of what the Apostle calls "fleshly lusts," or, in modern style, the passions. We will examine secondly, the war which they wage "against the soul." Our third part will inform you of the means of abstaining from these fleshly lusts. And in the last place we will endeavor to make you feel the power of this motive, "as strangers and pilgrims," and to press home this exhortation of the Apostle, "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."

I. In order to understand the nature of the passions, we will explain the subject by a few preliminary remarks.

1. An intelligent being ought to love every thing that can elevate, perpetuate, and make him happy; and to avoid whatever can degrade, confine, and render him miserable. This, far from being a human depravity, is a perfection of nature. Man has it in common with celestial intelligences, and with God Himself. This reflection removes a false sense, which the language of St. Peter may seem at first to convey, as if the Apostle meant by eradicating "fleshly lusts" to destroy the true interests of man. The most ancient enemies of the Christian religion loaded it with this reproach, because they did not understand it; and some superficial people, who know no more of religion than the surface, pretended to render it odious by the same means. Under pretense that the Christian religion forbids ambition, they say it degrades man, and under pretense that it forbids misguided self-love, they say it makes man miserable. A gross error! A false idea of Christianity! If the Gospel humbles, it is to elevate us; if it forbids a self-love ill-directed, it is in order to conduct us to substantial happiness. By "fleshly lusts," St. Peter does not mean such desires of the heart as put us on aspiring after real happiness and true glory.

2. An intelligent being united to a body, and lodged, if I may speak so, in a portion of matter under this law, that according to the divers motions of this matter he shall receive sensations of pleasure or pain, must naturally love to excite within himself sensations of pleasure, and to avoid painful feelings. This is agreeable to the institution of the Creator. He intends, for reasons of adorable wisdom, to preserve a society of mankind for several ages on earth. To accomplish this design, He has so ordered it that what contributes to the support of the body shall give the soul pleasure, and that which would dissolve it would give pain, so that by these means

we may preserve ourselves. Aliments are agreeable; the dissolution of the parts of our bodies is painful; love, hatred, and anger, properly understood, and exercised to a certain degree, are natural and fit. The Stoics, who annihilated the passions, did not know man, and the schoolmen, who to comfort people under the gout or the stone, told them that a rational man ought not to pay any regard to what passed in his body, never made many disciples among wise men. This observation affords us a second clew to the meaning of the Apostle: at least it gives us a second precaution to avoid an error. By "fleshly lusts" he does not mean a natural inclination to preserve the body and the ease of life; he allows love, hatred, and anger, to a certain degree, and as far as the exercise of them does not prejudice a greater interest. Observe well this last expression, as far as may be without prejudice to a greater interest. The truth of our second reflection depends on this restriction.

3. A being composed of two substances, one of which is more excellent than the other; a being placed between two interests, one of which is greater than the other, ought, when these two interests clash, to prefer the more noble before the less noble, the greater interest before the less. This third principle is a third clew to what St. Peter calls "lusts," or passions. Man has two substances, and two interests. As far as he can without prejudicing his eternal interest he ought to endeavor to promote his temporal interest: but when the two clash he ought to sacrifice the less to the greater. "Fleshly lusts" is put for what is irregular and depraved in our desires, and what makes us prefer the body before the soul, a temporal before an eternal interest. That this is the meaning of the Apostle is clear from his calling these passions or "lusts fleshly." What is the meaning of this word? The Scripture generally uses the word in two senses. Sometimes it is literally and properly put for flesh, and sometimes it signifies sin. St. Peter calls the passions "fleshly" in both these senses; in the first, because some come from the body, as voluptuousness, anger, drunkenness; and in the second, because they spring from our depravity. Hence the Apostle Paul puts among the works of the flesh both those which have their seat in the body, and those which have in a manner no connection with it. "Now the works of the flesh are these, adultery, lasciviousness, idolatry, heresies, envyings." According to this the "works of the flesh" are not only such as are seated in the flesh (for envy and heresy can not be of this sort), but all depraved dispositions.

This is a general idea of the passions: but as it is vague and obscure, we will endeavor to explain it more distinctly, and with this view we will show—first, what the passions do in the mind—next, what they do in the senses—thirdly, what they are in the imagination—and lastly, what they are in the heart. Four portraits of the passions, four explications of the condition of man. In order to connect the matter more closely, as we show you what "fleshly lusts" are in these four views, we will endeavor to convince you that in these four respects they "war against the soul." The second part of our discourse, therefore, which was to treat of the disorders of the passions, will be included in the first, which explains their nature.

1. The passions produce in the mind a strong attention to whatever can justify and gratify them. The most odious objects may be so placed as to appear agreeable, and the most lovely objects so as to appear odious. There is no absurdity so palpable but it may be made to appear likely; and there is no truth so clear but it may be made to appear doubtful. A passionate man fixes all the attention of his mind on such sides of objects as favor his passion, and this is the source of innumerable false judgings, of which we are every day witnesses and authors.

If you observe all the passions, you will find they have all this character. What is vengeance in the mind of a vindictive man? It is a fixed attention to all the favorable lights in which vengeance may be considered; it is a continual study to avoid every odious light in which the subject may be placed. On the one side there is a certain deity in the world, who has made revenge a law. This deity is worldly honor, and at the bar of this judge to forget injuries is mean, and to pardon them cowardice. On the other side vengeance disturbs society, usurps the office of a magistrate, and violates the precepts of religion. A dispassionate man, examining without prejudice this question, Ought I to revenge the injury I have received? would weigh all these motives, consider each apart, and all together, and would determine to act according as the most just and weighty reasons should determine him: but a revengeful man considers none but the first, he pays no attention to the last; he always exclaims my honor, my honor; he never says my religion and my salvation.

What is hatred? It is a close attention to a man's imperfections. Is any man free? Is any man so imperfect as to have nothing good in him? Is there nothing to compensate his defects? This man is not handsome, but he is wise: his genius is not lively, but his heart is sincere: he can not assist you with money, but he can give you much good advice, supported by an excellent example: he is not either prince, king, or emperor, but he is a man, a Christian, a believer, and in all these respects he deserves esteem. The passionate man turns away his eyes from all these advantageous sides, and attends only to the rest. Is it astonishing that he hates a person in whom he sees nothing but imperfection? Thus a counselor opens and sets forth his cause with such artifice that law seems to be clearly on his side; he forgets one fact, suppresses one circumstance, omits to draw one inference, which being brought forward to view, entirely change the nature of the subject, and his client loses his cause. In the same manner, a defender of a false religion always revolves in his mind the arguments that seem to establish it, and never recollects those which subvert it. He will curtail a sentence, cut off what goes before, leave out what follows, and retain only such detached expressions as seem to countenance his error, but which in connection with the rest would strip it of all probability. What is still more singular is, that love to true religion, that love which, under the direction of reason, opens a wide field of argument and evidence, engages us in this sort of false judging, when we give ourselves up to it through passion or prejudice.

This is what the passions do in the mind, and it is easy to comprehend the reason St. Peter had to say in this view, "fleshly lusts war against the soul." Certainly one of the noblest advantages of a man is to reason, to examine proofs and weigh motives, to consider an object on every side, to combine the various arguments that are alleged either for or against a proposition, in order on these grounds to regulate our ideas and opinions, our hatred and our love. The passionate man renounces this advantage, he never reasons in a passion, his mind is limited, his soul is in chains, his "fleshly passions war against his soul."

Having examined the passions in the mind, let us consider them in the *senses*. To comprehend this, recollect what we just now said, that the passions owe their origin to the Creator, who instituted them for the purpose of preserving us. When an object would injure health or life, it is necessary to our safety that there should be an emotion in our senses to affect a quick escape from the danger; fear does this. A man struck with the idea of sudden danger has a rapidity which he could not have in a tranquil state, or during a cool trial of his power. It is necessary, when an enemy approaches to destroy us, that our senses should so move as to animate us with a power of resistance. Anger does this, for it is a collection of spirits—but allow me to borrow here the words of a modern philosopher, who has admirably expressed the motions excited by the passions in our bodies. "Before the sight of an object of passion," says he, "the spirits were diffused through all the body to preserve every part alike, but on the appearance of this new object the whole system is shaken; the greater part of the animal spirits rush into all the exterior parts of the body, in order to put it into a condition proper to produce such motions as are necessary to acquire the good, or to avoid the evil now present. If it happen that the power of man is unequal to his wants, these same spirits distribute themselves so as to make him utter mechanically certain words and cries, and so as to spread over his countenance and over the rest of his body an air capable of agitating others with the same passion with which he himself is moved. For as men and other animals are united together by eyes and ears, when any one is agitated he necessarily shakes all others that see and hear him, and naturally produces painful feelings in their imaginations, which interest them in his relief. The rest of the spirits rush violently into the heart, the lungs, the liver, and the other vitals, in order to lay all these parts under contribution, and hastily to derive from them as quick as possible the spirits necessary for the preservation of the body in these extraordinary efforts." Such are the movements excited by the passions in the senses, and all these to a certain degree are necessary for the preservation of our bodies, and are the institutions of our Creator: but three things are necessary to preserve order in these emotions. First, they must never be excited in the body without the direction of the will and the reason. Secondly, they must always be proportional, I mean, the emotion of fear, for example, must never be, except in sight of objects capable of hurting us; the emotion of anger must never be, except in sight of an enemy who actually has both the will and the power of injuring our well-being. And thirdly, they must always stop when and where we will they should. When the passions subvert this order, they violate three wise institutes of our Creator.

The emotions excited by the passions in our senses are not *free.* An angry man is carried beyond himself in spite of himself. A voluptuous man receives a sensible impression from an exterior object, and in spite of all the dictates of reason throws himself into a flaming fire that consumes him.

The emotions excited by the passions in our senses are not *proportional;* I mean that a timorous man, for example, turns as pale at the sight of a fanciful as of a real danger; he sometimes fears a phantom and a substance alike. A man "whose god is his belly," feels his appetite as much excited by a dish fatal to his health as by one necessary to support his strength, and to keep him alive.

The emotions excited by the passions in our senses do not obey the orders of our *will*. The movement is an overflow of spirits which no reflections can restrain. It is not a gentle fire to give the blood a warmth necessary to its circulation; it is a volcano pouring out its flame all liquid and destructive on every side. It is not a gentle stream, purling in its proper bed, meandering through the fields, and moistening, refreshing, and invigorating them as it goes, but it is a rapid flood, breaking down all its banks, carrying every where mire and mud, sweeping away the harvest, subverting hills and trees, and carrying away every thing on all sides that oppose its passage. This is what the passions do in the senses, and do you not conceive, my brethren, that in this second respect they "war against the soul?"

They "war against the soul" by the disorders they introduce into that body which they ought to preserve. They dissipate the spirits, weaken the memory, wear out the brain. Behold those trembling hands, those discolored eyes, that body bent and bowed down to the ground—these are the effects of violent passions. When the body is in such a state, it is easy to conceive that the soul suffers with it. The union between the two is so close that the alteration of the one necessarily alters the other. When the capacity of the soul is absorbed by painful sensations, we are incapable of attending to truth. If the spirits necessary to support us in meditation be dissipated, we can no longer meditate. If the brain, which must be of a certain consistence to receive impressions of objects, has lost that consistence, it can recover it no more.

They "war against the soul" by disconcerting the whole economy of man, and by making him consider such sensations of pleasure as Providence gave him only for the sake of engaging him to preserve his body as a sort of supreme good, worthy of all his care and attention for its own sake.

They "war against the soul" because they reduce it to a state of slavery to the body, over which it ought to rule. Is any thing more unworthy of an immortal soul than to follow no other rule of judging than an agitation of the organs of the body, the heat of the blood, the motion of animal spirits? And does not this daily happen to a passionate man? A man who reasons fairly when his senses are tranquil, does he not reason like an idiot when his senses are agitated? Cool and dispassionate, he thinks he ought to eat and drink only what is necessary to support his health and his life—at most to "receive with thanksgiving" such innocent pleasures as religion allows him to enjoy; but when his senses are agitated, his taste becomes dainty, and he thinks he may glut himself with food, drown himself in wine, and give himself up without reserve, to all the excesses of voluptuousness. When his senses were cool and tranquil, he thought it sufficient to oppose precautions of prudence against the designs of an enemy to his injury: but when his senses are agitated he thinks he ought to attack him, fall on him, stab him, kill him. When he was cool he was free, he was a sovereign, but now that his senses are agitated, he is a subject, he is a slave. Base submission! Unworthy slavery! We blush for human nature when we see it in such bondage. Behold that man, he has as many virtues, perhaps more, than most men. Examine him on the article of good breeding. He perfectly understands, and scrupulously observes all the laws of it. Examine him on the point of disinterestedness. He abounds in it, and to see the manner in which he gives, you would say he thought he increased his fortune by bestowing it in acts of benevolence. Examine him concerning religion. He respects the majesty of it, he always pronounces the name of God with veneration, he never thinks of His works without admiration, or His attributes without reverence or fear. Place this man at a gaming table, put the dice or the cards in his hand, and you will know him no more; he loses all self-possession, he forgets politeness, disinterestedness, and religion, he insults his fellow-creatures, and blasphemes his God. His soul teems with avarice, his body is distorted, his thoughts are troubled, his temper is changed, his countenance turns pale, his eyes sparkle, his mouth foams, his spirits are in a flame, he is another man, no, it is not a man, it is a wild beast, it is a devil.

We never give ourselves up thus to our senses without feeling some pleasure, and what is very dreadful, this pleasure abides in the memory, makes deep traces in the brain, in a word, imprints itself on the imagination—and this leads us to our third article, in which we are to consider what the passions do in the imagination.

If the senses were excited to act only by the presence of objects—if the soul were agitated only by the action of the senses, one single mean would suffice to guard us from irregular passions; that would be to flee from the object that excites them; but the passions produce other disorders, they leave deep impressions on the *imagination.* When we give ourselves up to the senses we feel pleasure, this pleasure strikes the imagination, and the imagination thus struck with the pleasure it has found, recollects it, and solicits the passionate man to return to objects that made him so happy.

Thus old men have sometimes miserable remains of a passion, which seems to suppose a certain constitution, and which should seem to be extinct, as the constitution implied is no more; but the recollection that such and such objects had been the cause of such and such pleasures is dear to their souls; they love to remember them, they make them a part of all their conversations; they drew flattering portraits, and by recounting their past pleasures, indemnify themselves for the prohibition under which old age has laid them. For the same reason it is that a worldling, who has plunged himself into all the dissipations of life, finds it so difficult to renounce the world when he comes to die. Indeed a body borne down with illness, a nature almost extinct, senses half dead, seem improper habitations of love to sensual pleasure; and yet imagination, struck with past pleasure, tells this skeleton that the world is amiable, that always when he went into it he enjoyed a real pleasure, and that, on the contrary, when he performed religious exercises he felt pain; and this lively impression gives such a man a present aversion to religion; it incessantly turns his mind toward the object of which death is about to deprive him, so that, without a miracle of grace, he can never look toward the objects of religion with desire and pleasure.

We go further. We affirm that the disorders of the passions in the imagination far exceed those in the senses; the action of the senses is limited: but that of the imagination is boundless, so that the difference is almost as great as that between finite and infinite, if you will pardon the expression. A man who actually takes pleasure in debauchery, feels this pleasure, but he does not persuade himself that he feels it more than he does: but a man who indulges his fancy forms most extravagant ideas, for imagination magnifies some objects, creates others, accumulates phantom upon phantom, and fills up a vast space with ideal joys which have no originals in nature. Hence it comes that we are more pleased with imaginary ideas than with the actual enjoyment of what we imagine, because imagination having made boundless promises, it gladdens the soul with the hope of more to supply the want of what present objects fail of producing.

O deplorable state of man! The littleness of his mind will not allow him to contemplate any object but that of his passion, while it is present to his senses; it will not allow him then to recollect the motives, the great motives, that should impel him to his duty: and when the object is absent, not being able to offer it to his senses, he presents it again to his imagination clothed with new and foreign charms, deceitful ideas of which make up for its absence, and excite in him a love more violent than that of actual possession, when he felt at least the folly and vanity of it. O horrid *war* of the passions *against the soul!* Shut the door of your closets against the enchanted object, it will enter with you. Try to get rid of it by traversing plains, and fields, and whole countries; cleave the waves of the sea, fly on the wings of the wind, and try to put between yourself and your enchantress the deep, the rolling ocean, she will travel with you, sail with you, every where haunt you, because wherever you go you will carry yourself, and within you, deep in your imagination, the bewitching image impressed.

Let us consider, in fine, the passions in the *heart*, and the disorders they cause there. What can fill the heart of man? A prophet has answered this question, and has included all morality in one point, "my chief good is to draw near to God;" but as God does not commune with us immediately, while we are in this world, but imparts felicity by means of creatures, he has given these creatures two characters, which being well examined by a reasonable man, conduct him to the Creator, but which turn the passionate man aside. On the one hand, creatures render us happy to a certain degree, this is their first character: on the other, they leave a void in the soul which they are incapable of filling, this is their second character. This is the design of God, and this design the passions oppose. Let us hear a reasonable man draw conclusions, and let us observe what opposite conclusions a passionate man draws.

The reasonable man says, creatures leave a void in my soul which they are incapable of filling: but what effect should this produce in my heart, and what end had God in setting bounds so strait to that power of making me happy, which He communicated to them? It was to reclaim me to Himself, to persuade me that He only can make me happy; it was to make me say to myself, my desires are eternal, whatever is not eternal is unequal to my desires; my passions are infinite, whatever is not infinite is beneath my passions, and God only can satisfy them.

A passionate man, from the void he finds in the creatures, draws conclusions directly opposite. Each creature in particular is incapable of making me happy: but could I unite them all, could I, so to speak, extract the substantial from all, certainly nothing would be wanting to my happiness. In this miserable supposition he becomes full of perturbation, he launches out, he collects, he accumulates. It is not enough to acquire conveniences, he must have superfluities. It is not enough that my name be known in my family, and among my acquaintance, it must be spread over the whole city, the province, the kingdom, the four parts of the globe. Every clime illuminated by the sun shall know that I exist, and that I have a superior genius. It is not enough to conquer some hearts, I will subdue all, and display the astonishing art of uniting all voices in my favor; men divided in opinion about every thing else shall agree in one point, that is, to celebrate my praise. It is not enough to have many inferiors, I must have no master, no equal, I must be a universal monarch, and subdue the whole world; and when I shall have accomplished these vast designs, I will seek other creatures to subdue, and more worlds to conquer. Thus the passions disconcert the plan of God! Such are the conclusions of a heart infatuated with passion!

The disciple of reason says, creatures contribute to render me happy to a certain degree: but this power is not their own. Gross, sensible, material beings can not contribute to the happiness of a spiritual creature. If creatures can augment my happiness, it is because God has lent them a power natural only to Himself. God is then the source of felicity, and all I see elsewhere is only an emanation of His essence: but if the streams be so pure, what is the fountain! If effects to be so noble, what is the cause! If rays be so luminous, what is the source of light from which they proceed!

The conclusions of an impassioned man are directly opposite. Says he, creatures render me happy to a certain degree, therefore they are the cause of my happiness, they deserve all my efforts, they shall be my god. Thus the passionate man renders to his aliments, his gold, his silver, his equipage, his horses, the most noble act of adoration. For what is the most noble act of adoration? Is it to build temples? To erect altars? To kill victims? To sacrifice burnt-offerings? To burn incense? No. It is that inclination of our heart to union with God, that aspiring to possess Him, that love, that effusion of soul, which makes us exclaim, "My chief good is to draw near to God." This homage the man of passion renders to the object of his passions, "his god is his belly," his "covetousness his idolatry;" and this is what "fleshly lusts" become in the heart. They remove us from God, and, by removing us from Him, deprive us of all the good that proceeds from a union with the Supreme Good, and thus make war with every part of ourselves, and with every moment of our duration.

War against our reason, for instead of deriving, by virtue of a union to God, assistance necessary to the practice of what reason approves, and what grace only renders practicable, we are given up to our evil dispositions, and compelled by our passions to do what our own reason abhors.

War against the regulation of life, for instead of putting on by virtue of union to God, the "easy yoke," and taking up the "light burden" which religion imposes, we become slaves of envy, vengeance and ambition; we are weighed down with a yoke of iron, which we have no power to get rid of, even though we groan under its intolerable weightiness.

War against conscience, for instead of being justified by virtue of a union with God, and having "peace with Him through our Lord Jesus Christ," and feeling that heaven begun, "joy unspeakable and full of glory," by following our passions we become a prey to distracting fear, troubles without end, cutting remorse, and awful earnests of eternal misery.

War on a dying bed, for whereas by being united to God our death-bed would have become a field of triumph, where the Prince of life, the Conqueror of death would have made us share His victory, by abandoning ourselves to our passions, we see nothing in a dying hour but an awful futurity, a frowning Governor, the bare idea of which alarms, terrifies, and drives us to despair.

III. We have seen the nature and the disorders of the passions, now let us examine what *remedies* we ought to apply. In order to prevent and correct the disorders, which the passions produce in the mind, we must observe the following rules:

1. *We must avoid precipitance, and suspend our judgment* It does not depend on us to have clear ideas of all things: but we have power to suspend our judgment till we obtain evidence of the nature of the object before us. This is one of the greatest advantages of an intelligent being. A celebrated divine has such a high idea of this that he maintains this hyperbolical thesis, that "always when we mistake, even in things indifferent in themselves, we sin, because then we abuse our reason, the use of which consists in never determining without evidence." Though we suppose this divine has exceeded the matter, yet it is certain that a wise man can never take too much pains to form a habit of not judging a point, not considering it as useful or advantageous till after he has examined it on every side. "Let a man," says a philosopher of great name, "let a man only pass one year in the world, hearing all they say, and believing nothing, entering every moment into himself, and suspending his judgment till truth and evidence appear, and I will esteem him more learned than Aristotle, wiser than Socrates, and a greater man than Plato."

2. A man must *reform even his education.* In every family the minds of children are turned to a certain point. Every family has its prejudice, I had almost said its absurdity; and hence it comes to pass that people despise the profession they do not exercise. Hear the merchant, he will tell you that nothing so much deserves the at-

tention of mankind as trade, as acquiring money by every created thing, as knowing the value of this, and the worth of that, as taxing, so to speak, all the works of art, and all the productions of nature. Hear the man of learning, he will tell you that the perfection of man consists in literature, that there is a difference as essential between a scholar and a man of no literature, as between a rational creature and a brute. Hear the soldier, he will tell you that the man of science is a pedant who ought to be confined to the dirt and darkness of the schools, that the merchant is the most sordid part of society, and that nothing is so noble as the profession of arms. One would think, to hear him talk, that the sword by his side is a patent for preeminence, and that mankind have no need of any people, who can not rout an army, cut through a squadron, or scale a wall. Hear him who has got the disease of quality; he will tell you that other men are nothing but reptiles beneath his feet, that human blood, stained every where else, is pure only in his veins. That nobility serves for every thing, for genius, and education, and fortune, and sometimes even for common sense and good faith. Hear the peasant, he will tell you that a nobleman is an enthusiast for appropriating to himself the virtues of his ancestors, and for pretending to find in old quaint names, and in worm-eaten papers, advantages which belong only to real and actual abilities. As I said before, each family has its prejudice, every profession has its folly, all proceeding from this principle, because we consider objects only in one point of view. To correct ourselves on this article, we must go to the source, examine how our minds were directed in our childhood; in a word, we must review and reform even our education.

3. In fine, *we must*, as well as we can, *choose a friend* wise enough to know truth, and generous enough to impart it to others; a man who will show us an object on every side, when we are inclined to consider it only on one. I say as well as you can, for to give this rule is to suppose two things, both sometimes alike impracticable; the one, that such a man can be found; and the other, that he will be heard with deference. When we are so happy as to find this inestimable treasure, we have found a remedy of marvelous efficacy against the disorders which the passions produce in the mind. Let us make the trial. Suppose a faithful friend should address one of you in this manner. Heaven has united in your favor the most happy circumstances. The blood of the greatest heroes animates you, and your name alone is an encomium. Besides this you have an affluent fortune, and Providence has given you abundance to support your dignity, and to discharge every thing that your splendid

station requires. You have also a fine and acute genius, and your natural talents are cultivated by an excellent education. Your health seems free from the infirmities of life, and if any man may hope for a long duration here, you are the man who may expect it. With all these noble advantages you may aspire at any thing. But one thing is wanting. You are dazzled with your own splendor, and your feeble eyes are almost put out with the brilliancy of your condition. Your imagination, struck with the idea of the prince whom you have the honor to serve, makes you consider yourself as a kind of royal personage. You have formed your family on the plan of the court. You are proud, arrogant, haughty. Your seat resembles a tribunal, and all your expressions are sentences from which it is a crime to appeal. As you will never suffer yourself to be contradicted, you seem to be applauded; but a sacrifice is made to your vanity and not to your merit, and people bow not to your reason but to your tyranny. As they fear you avail yourself of your credit to brave others, each endeavors to oppose you, and to throw down in your absence the altar he had erected in your presence, and on which no incense sincerely offered burns, except that which you yourself put there.

So much for irregular passions in the mind. Let us now lay down a few rules for the government of the *senses.*

Before we proceed, we can not help deploring the misery of a man who is impelled by the disorders of his senses, and the heat of his constitution, to criminal passions. Such a man often deserves pity more than indignation. A bad constitution is sometimes compatible with a good heart. We can not think without trembling of an ungrateful man, a cheat, a traitor, an assassin; for their crimes always suppose liberty of mind and consent of will: but a man driven from the post of duty by the heat of his blood, by an overflow of humors, by the fermentation and flame of his spirits, often sins by constraint, and, so to speak, protests against his crime even while he commits it. Hence we often see angry people become full of love and pity, always inclined to forgive, or always ready to ask pardon; while others, cold, calm, tranquil, revolve eternal hatreds in their souls, and leave them for an inheritance to their children.

However, though the irregularity of the senses diminishes the atrociousness of the crime, yet it can not excuse those who do not make continual efforts to correct it. To acknowledge that we are constitutionally inclined to violate the laws of God, and to live quietly in practices directed by constitutional heat, is to have the interior tainted. It is an evidence that the malady which at first attacked only the exterior of the man has communicated itself to all the frame, and infected the vitals. We oppose this against the frivolous excuses of some sinners, who, while they abandon themselves like brute beasts to the most guilty passions, lay all the blame on the misfortune of their constitution. They say their will has no part in their excesses—they can not change their constitution—and God can not justly blame them for irregularities which proceeded from the natural union of the soul with the body. Indeed they prove by their talk that they would be very sorry not to have a constitution to serve for an apology for sin, and to cover the licentiousness of casting off an obligation, which the law of God, according to them, requires of none but such as have received from nature the power of discharging it. If these maxims be admitted, what becomes of the morality of Jesus Christ? What becomes of the commands concerning mortification and repentance? But people who talk thus, intend less to correct their faults than to palliate them; and this discourse is intended only for such as are willing to apply means to free themselves from the dominion of irregular passions.

Certainly the best advice that can be given to a man whose constitution inclines him to sin, is, that he avoid opportunities, and flee from such objects as affect and disconcert him. It does not depend on you to be unconcerned in the sight of an object fatal to your innocence: but it does depend on you to keep out of the way of seeing it. It does not depend on you to be animated at the sight of a gaming table: but it does depend on you to avoid such whimsical places, where sharping goes for merit. Let us not be presumptuous. Let us make diffidence a principle of virtue. Let us remember St. Peter; he was fired with zeal, he thought every thing possible to his love, his presumption was the cause of his fall, and many by following his example have yielded to temptation, and have found the truth of an apocryphal maxim, "he that loveth danger shall perish therein."

After all, that virtue which owes its firmness only to a want of an opportunity for vice is very feeble, and it argues very little attainment only to be able to resist our passions in the absence of temptation. I recollect a maxim of St. Paul, "I wrote unto you not to company with fornicators," but I did not mean that you should have no conversation "with fornicators of this world, for then must ye needs go out of the world." Literally, to avoid all objects dangerous to our passions, "we must go out of the world." Are there no remedies adapted to the necessity we are under of living among mankind? Is there no such thing as correcting, with the assistance of grace, the irregularities of our constitution, and freeing ourselves from its dominion, so that we may be able, if not to seek our temptation for the sake of the glory of subduing them, at least to resist them, and not suffer them to conquer us, when in spite of all our caution they will attack us? Three remedies are necessary to our success in this painful undertaking; to suspend acts—to flee idleness—to mortify sense.

We must *suspend acts.* Let us form a just idea of temperament or constitution. It consists in one of these two things, or in both together; in a disposition of organs in the nature of animal spirits. For example, a man is angry when the organs which serve that passion, are more accessible than others, and when his animal spirits are easily heated. Hence it necessarily follows that two things must be done to correct constitutional anger; the one, the disposition of the organs must be changed; and the other, the nature of the spirits must be changed, so that on the one hand, the spirits no longer finding these organs disposed to give them passage, and on the other hand the spirits having lost a facility of taking fire, there will be within the man none of the revolutions of sense, which he could not resist when they were excited.

A suspension of acts changes the disposition of the organs. The more the spirits enter into these organs, the more easy is the access, and the propensity insurmountable; the more acts of anger there are, the more incorrigible will anger become; because the more acts of anger there are, the more accessible will the organs of anger be, so that the animal spirits will naturally fall there by their own motion. The spirits then must be restrained. The bias they have to the ways to which they have been habituated by the practice of sin must be turned, and we must always remember a truth often inculcated, that is, that the more acts of sin we commit the more difficult to correct will habits of sin become; but that when by taking pains with ourselves, we have turned the course of the spirits, they will take different ways, and this is done by suspending the acts.

It is not impossible to change even the nature of our animal spirits. This is done by suspending what contributed to nourish them in a state of disorder. What contributes to the nature of spirits? Diet, exercise, air, the whole course of life we live. It is very difficult in a discourse like this, to give a full catalogue of remedies proper to regulate the animal spirits and the humors of the body. I believe it would be dangerous to many people. Some men are so made that reflections too accurate on this article would be more likely to increase their vices than to diminish them. However, there is not one person willing to turn his attention to this subject who is not able to become a preacher to himself. Let a man enter into himself, let him survey the history of his excuses, let him examine all circumstances, let him recollect what passed within him on such and such occasion, let him closely consider what moved and agitated him, and he will learn more by such a meditation than all sermons and casuistical books can teach him.

The second remedy is to *avoid idleness.* What is idleness? It is that situation of soul in which no effort is made to direct the course of the spirit this way rather than that. What must happen then? We have supposed that some organs of a man constitutionally irregular are more accessible than others. When we are idle, and make no efforts to direct the animal spirits, they naturally take the easiest way, and consequently direct their own course to those organs which passion has made easy of access. To avoid this disorder, we must be employed, and always employed. This rule is neither impracticable nor difficult. We do not mean that the soul should be always on the stretch in meditation or prayer. An innocent recreation, an easy conversation, agreeable exercise, may have each its place in occupations of this kind. For these reasons we applaud those, who make such maxims parts of the education of youth, as either to teach them an art or employ them in some bodily exercise. Not that we propose this maxim as it is received in some families, where they think all the merit of a young gentleman consists in hunting, riding, or some exercise of that kind; and that of a young lady, in distinguishing herself in dancing, music, or needle-work. We mean, that these employments should be subordinate to others more serious, and more worthy of an immortal soul, that they should serve only for relaxation, so that by thus taking part in the innocent pleasures of the world, we may be better prepared to avoid the guilty pursuits of it.

The third remedy is *mortification of the senses*, a remedy which St. Paul always used, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection." Few people have such sound notions. Some casuists have stretched the subject beyond its due bounds so as to establish this principle, that sinful man can enjoy no pleasure without a crime, because sin having been his delight, pain ought to be forever his lot. This principle may perhaps be probably considered in regard to unregenerate men: but it can not be admitted in regard to true Christians. Accordingly, we place among those who have unsound notions of mortifications, all such as make it consist in vain practices, useless in themselves, and having no relation to the principal design of religion, "bodily exercise profiting little;" they are "commandments of men," in the language of Scripture.

But if some have entertained extravagant notions of mortification, others have restrained the subject too much. Under pretense that the religion of Jesus Christ is spiritual, they have neglected the study and practice of evangelical morality; but we have heard the example of St. Paul, and it is our duty to imitate it. We must "keep under the body," and "bring it into subjection," the senses must be bridled by violence, innocent things must often be refused them, in order to obtain the mastery when they require unlawful things; we must fast, we must avoid ease, because it tends to effeminacy. All this is difficult, I grant: but if the undertaking be hazardous, success will be glorious. Thirty, forty years, employed in reforming an irregular constitution, ought not to be regretted. What a glory to have subdued the senses! What a glory to have restored the soul to its primitive superiority, to have crucified the "body of sin," to lead it in triumph, and to destroy, that is to *annihilate it*, according to an expression of Scriptures, and so to approach those pure spirits, to whom the motions of matter can make no alteration!

The disorders produced by the passions in the imagination, and against which also we ought to furnish you with some remedies, are like those complicated disorders which require opposite remedies, because they are the effect of opposite causes, so that the means employed to diminish one part not unfrequently increase another. It should seem at first, that the best remedy which can be applied to disorders introduced by the passions into the imagination, is well to consider the nature of the objects of the passions, and thoroughly to know the world: and yet on the other hand, it may truly be said that the most certain way of succeeding would be to know nothing at all about the world. If you know the pleasures of the world, if you know by experience the pleasure of gratifying a passion, you will fall into the misfortune we wish you to avoid; you will receive bad impressions; you will acquire dangerous recollections, and a seducing memory will be a new occasion of sin: but if you do not know the pleasures of the world, you will be likely to form ideas too flattering of it, you will create images more beautiful than the originals themselves, and by the immense value you set upon the victim, when you are just going to offer it up perhaps you will retreat, and not make the sacrifice. Hence we often see persons whom the superstition or avarice of their families has in childhood confined in a nunnery (suppose it were allowable in other cases, yet in this case done prematurely), I say, these persons not knowing the world, wish for its pleasures with more ardor than if they had actually experienced them. So they who have never been in company with the great, generally imagine that their society is full of charms, that all is pleasure in their company, and that a circle of rich and fashionable people sitting in an elegant apartment is far more lively and animated than one composed of people of inferior rank, and middling fortune. Hence also it is that they who, after having lived a dissipated life, have the rare happiness of renouncing it, do so with more sincerity than others, who never knew the vanity of such a life by experience. So very different are the remedies for disorders of the imagination.

But as in complicated disorders, to which we have compared them, a wise physician chiefly attends to the most dangerous complaint, and distributes his remedies so as to counteract those which are less fatal, we will observe the same method on this occasion. Doubtless the most dangerous way to obtain a contempt for the pleasures of the world, is to get an experimental knowledge of them, in order to detach ourselves more easily from them by the thorough sense we have of their vanity. We hazard a fall by approaching too near, and such very often is the ascendency of the world over us, that we can not detach ourselves from it though we are disgusted with it. Let us endeavor then to preserve our imagination pure; let us abstain from pleasure to preclude the possibility of remembering them; let retirement, and, if it be practicable, perpetual privacy, from the moment we enter into the world to the day we quit it, save us from all bad impressions, so that we may never know the effects which worldly objects would produce in our passions. This method, sure and effectual, is useless and impracticable in regard to such as have received bad impressions on their imagination. People of this character ought to pursue the second method we mentioned, that is to profit by their losses, and derive wisdom from their errors. When you recollect sin, you may remember the folly and pain of it. Let the courtier whose imagination is yet full of the vain glory of a splendid court, remember the intrigue he has known there, the craft, the injustice, the treachery, the dark and dismal plans that are formed and executed there.

I would advise such a man, when his passions solicit him to sin, to call in the aid of some other idea to strike and affect his imagination. Let him make choice of that out of the truths of religion which seems most likely to impress his mind, and let him learn the art of instantly opposing impression against impression, and image against image; for example, let him often fix his attention on death, judgment, and hell; let him often say to himself, I must die soon, I must stand before a severe tribunal, and appear in the presence of an impartial judge; let him go down in thought into that gulf, where the wicked expiate in eternal torments their momentary pleasures; let him think he hears the sound of the piercing cries of the victims whom divine justice sacrifices in hell: let him often weigh in his mind the "chains of darkness" that load miserable creatures in hell; let him often approach the fire that consumes them; let him, so to speak, scent the smoke that rises up forever and ever; let him often think of eternity, and place himself in that awful moment in which "the angel will lift up his hand to heaven, and swear by him that liveth forever and ever, that there shall be time no longer;" and let the numerous reflections furnished by all these subjects be kept as *corps de reserve*, always ready to fly to his aid, when the enemy approaches to attack him.

In fine, to heal the disorders which the passions produce in the heart, two things must be done. First, the vanity of all the creatures must be observed; and this will free us from the desire of possessing and collecting the whole in order to fill up the void which single enjoyments leave. Secondly, we must ascend from creatures to the Creator, in order to get rid of the folly of attributing to the world the perfection and sufficiency of God.

Let us free our hearts from an avidity for new pleasures by comprehending all creatures in our catalogue of vanities. I allow, inconstancy, and love of novelty are in some sense rational. It is natural for a being exposed to trouble to choose to change his condition, and as that in which he is yields certain trouble, to try whether another will not be something easier. It is natural to a man who has found nothing but imperfect pleasure in former enjoyments, to desire new objects. The most noble souls, the greatest geniuses, the largest hearts, have often the most inconstancy and love of novelty, because the extent of their capacity and the space of their wishes make them feel, more than other men, the diminutiveness and incompetency of all creatures. But the misfortune is, man can not change his situation without entering into another almost like that from which he came. Let us persuade ourselves that there is nothing substantial in creatures, that all conditions, besides characters of vanity common to all human things, have some imperfections peculiar to themselves. If you rise out of obscurity, you will not have the troubles of obscurity, but you will have those of conspicuous stations; you will make talk for every body, you will be exposed to envy, you will be responsible to each individual for your conduct. If you quit solitude, you will not have the troubles of solitude, but you will have those of society; you will live under restraint, you will lose your liberty, inestimable liberty, the greatest treasure of mankind, you will have to bear with the faults of all people connected with you. If heaven gives you a family, you will not have the troubles of such as have none, but you will have others necessarily resulting from domestic connections; you will multiply your miseries by the number of your children, you will fear for their fortune, you will be in pain about their health, and you will tremble for fear of their death. My brethren, I repeat it again, there is nothing substantial in this life. Every condition has difficulties of its own as well as the common inanity of all human things. If, in some sense, nothing ought to surprise us less than the inconstancy of mankind and their love of novelty, in another view, nothing ought to astonish us more, at least there is nothing more weak and senseless. A man who thinks to remedy the vanity of earthly things by running from one object to another, is like him who, in order to determine whether there be in a great heap of stones any one capable of nourishing him, should resolve to taste them all one after another. Let us shorten our labor. Let us put all creatures into one class. Let us cry, vanity in all. If we determine to pursue new objects, let us choose such as are capable of satisfying us. Let us not seek them here below. They are not to be found in this old world, which God has cursed. They are in the "new heavens, and the new earth," which religion promises. To comprehend all creatures in a catalogue of vanities is an excellent rule to heal the heart of the disorders of passion.

Next we must frequently ascend from creatures to the Creator, and cease to consider them as the supreme good. We intend here a devotion of all times, places, and circumstances; for, my brethren, one great source of depravity in the most eminent saints is to restrain the spirit of religion to certain times, places, and circumstances. There is an art of glorifying God by exercising religion every where. "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God." Do you enjoy the pleasures of sense? Say to yourself, God is the author of this pleasure. The nourishment I derive from my food is not necessarily produced by aliments, they have no natural power to move my nerves, God has communicated it to them; there is no necessary connection between the motions of my senses and agreeable sensations in my soul, it is God who has established the union between motion and sensation. The particles emitted by this flower could not necessarily move the nerves of my smell, it is God who has established this law; the motion of my smelling nerves can not naturally excite a sensation of agreeable odor in my soul, it is God who has established this union; and so of the rest. God is supreme happiness, the source from which all the charms of creatures proceed. He is the light of the sun, the flavor of food, the fragrance of odors, the harmony of sounds, He is whatever is capable of producing real pleasure, because He eminently possesses all felicity, and because all kinds of felicity flow from Him as their spring. Because we love pleasure we ought to love God, from whom pleasure proceeds; because we love pleasure we ought to abstain from it, when God prohibits it, because He is infinitely able to indemnify us for all the sacrifices we make to His orders. To ascend from creatures to the Creator is the last remedy we prescribe for the disorders of the passions. Great duties they are: but they are founded on strong motives.

Of these St. Peter mentions one of singular efficacy, that is, that we are "strangers and pilgrims" upon earth. "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." The believers to whom the Apostle wrote this epistle were "strangers and pilgrims" in three senses—as exiles—as Christians—and as mortals.

1. As *exiles*. This epistle is addressed to such strangers as were scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. But who were these strangers? Commentators are divided. Some think they were Jews who had been carried out of their country in divers revolutions under Tiglath Pileser, Shalmaneser, Nebuchadnezzar, and Ptolemy. Others think they were the Jewish Christians who fled on account of the martyrdom of Stephen. Certain it is these Christians were *stranger* and probably exiles for religion. Now people of this character have special motives to govern their passions.

Strangers are generally very little beloved in the place of their exile. Although rational people treat them with hospitality; though nature inspires some with respect for the wretched of every character; though piety animates some with veneration for people firm in their religious sentiments; yet, it must be allowed, the bulk of the people usually see them with other eyes; they envy them the air they breathe, and the earth they walk on; they consider them as so many usurpers of their rights; and they think that as much as exiles partake of the benefits of government, and the liberty of trade, so much they retrench from the portion of the natives.

Besides, the people commonly judge of merit by fortune, and as fortune and banishment seldom go together, popular prejudice seldom runs high in favor of exiles. Jealousy views them with a suspicious eye, malice imputes crimes to them, injustice accuses them for public calamities . . . . . . we will not enlarge. Let an inviolable fidelity to the state, an unsuspected love to government, an unreserved conformity to religion, silence accusation, and compel, so to speak, an esteem that is not natural and free. Moreover, religious exiles have given up a great deal for conscience, and they must choose either to lose the reward of their former labors, or to persevere. A man who has only taken a few easy steps in religion, if he let loose his passions, may be supposed rational in this, his life is all of a piece. He considers present interest as the supreme good, and he employs himself wholly in advancing his present interest, he lays down a principle, he infers a consequence, and he makes sin produce all possible advantage. An abominable principle certainly, but a uniform train of principle and consequence; a fatal advantage in a future state, but a real advantage in the present: but such a *stranger* as we have described, a man banished his country for religion, if he continues to gratify fleshly passions, is a contradictory creature, a sort of idiot, who is at one and the same time a martyr to vice and a martyr to virtue. He has the fatal secret of rendering both time and eternity wretched, and arming against himself heaven and earth, God and Satan, paradise and hell. On the one hand, for the sake of religion he quits every thing dear, and renounces the pleasure of his native soil, the society of his friends, family connections, and every prospect of preferment and fortune; thus he is a martyr for virtue, by this he renders the present life inconvenient, and arms against himself the world, Satan, and hell. On the other hand, he stabs the practical part of religion, violates all the sacred laws of austerity, retirement, humility, patience, and love, all which religion most earnestly recommends; by so doing he becomes a martyr for sin, renders futurity miserable, and arms against himself God, heaven, and eternity. The same God who forbade superstition and idolatry, enjoined all the virtues we have enumerated, and prohibited every opposite vice. If men be determined to be damned, better go the broad than the narrow way. Who but a madman would attempt to go to hell by encountering the difficulties that lie in the way to heaven!

2. The believers to whom Peter wrote were strangers as *Christians*, and therefore strangers because believers. What is the fundamental maxim of the Christian religion? Jesus Christ told Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world." This is the maxim of a Christian, the first great leading principle, "his kingdom is not of this

world;" his happiness and misery, his elevation and depression, depend on nothing in this world.

The first principle is the ground of the Apostle's exhortation. The passions destroy this maxim by supposing the world capable of making us happy or miserable. Revenge supposes our honor to depend on the world, on the opinion of those idiots who have determined that a man of honor ought to revenge an affront. Ambition supposes our elevation to depend on the world, that is, on the dignities which ambitious men idolize. Avarice supposes our riches depend on this world, on gold, silver, and estates.

These are not the ideas of a Christian. His honor is not of this world, it depends on the ideas of God, who is a just dispenser of glory. His elevation is not of this world, it depends on thrones and crowns which God prepares. His riches are not of this world, they depend on treasures in heaven, where "thieves do not break through and steal." It is allowable for a man educated in these great princiciples, but whose infirmity prevents his always thinking on them; it is indeed allowable for a man who can not always bend his mind to reflection, meditation, and elevation above the world; it is indeed allowable for such a man sometimes to unbend his mind, to amuse himself with cultivating a tulip, or embellishing his head with a crown; but that this tulip, that this crown should seriously occupy such a man—that they should take up the principal attention of a Christian who has such refined ideas and such glorious hopes, this, this is entirely incompatible.

3. In fine, we are strangers and pilgrims by necessity of nature as mortal men. If this life were eternal, it would be a question whether it were more advantageous for man to gratify his passions than to subdue them—whether the tranquillity, the equanimity, the calm of a man perfectly free and entirely master of himself, would not be preferable to the troubles, conflicts, and turbulence of a man in bondage to his passions. Passing this question, we will grant that were this life eternal, prudence and self-love, well understood, would require some indulgence of passion. In this case there would be an immense distance between the rich and the poor, and riches should be acquired; there would be an immense distance between the high and the low, and elevation should be sought; there would be an immense distance between him who mortified his senses and him who gratified them, and sensual pleasures would be requisite.

But death, death renders all these things alike; at least it makes so little difference between the one and the other, that it is hardly discernible. The most sensible motive therefore to abate the passions, is death. The tomb is the best course of morality. Study avarice in the coffin of a miser; this is the man who accumulated heap upon heap, riches upon riches. See a few boards inclose him and a few square inches of earth contain him. Study ambition in the grave of that enterprising man; see his noble designs, his extensive projects, his boundless expedients are all shattered and sunk in this fatal gulf of human projects. Approach the tomb of the proud man, and there investigate pride; see the mouth that pronounced lofty expressions, condemned to eternal silence, the piercing eyes that convulsed the world with fear, covered with a midnight gloom; the formidable arm, that distributed the destinies of mankind, without motion and life. Go to the tomb of the nobleman, and there study quality; behold his magnificent titles, his royal ancestors, his flattering inscriptions, his learned genealogies, are all gone, or going to be lost with himself in the same dust. Study voluptuousness at the grave of the voluptuous; see, his senses are destroyed, his organs broken to pieces, his bones scattered at the grave's mouth, and the whole temple of sensual pleasure subverted from its foundation.

Here we finish this discourse. There is a great difference between this and other subjects of discussion. When we treat of a point of doctrine, it is sufficient that you hear it, and remember the consequences drawn from it. When we explain a difficult text, it is enough that you understand it and recollect it. When we press home a particular duty of morality, it is sufficient that you apply it to the particular circumstance to which it belongs.

But what regards the passions is of universal and perpetual use. We always carry the principles of these passions within us, and we should always have assistance at hand to subdue them. Always surrounded with objects of our passions, we should always be guarded against them. We should remember these things when we see the benefits of fortune, to free ourselves from an immoderate attachment to them; before human grandeur to despise it; before sensual objects to subdue them; before our enemy, to forgive him; before friends, children, and families, to hold ourselves disengaged from them. We should always examine in what part of ourselves the passions hold their throne, whether in the mind, the senses, or the imagination, or the heart. We should always examine whether they have depraved the heart, defiled the imagination, perverted the senses, or blinded the mind. We should ever remember that we are strangers upon earth, that to this our condition calls us, our religion invites us, and our nature compels us.

But alas! It is this, it is this general influence which these exhortations ought to have over our lives, that makes us fear we have addressed them to you in vain. When we treat of a point of doctrine, we may persuade ourselves it has been understood. When we explain a difficult text, we flatter ourselves we have thrown some light upon it. When we urge a moral duty, we hope the next occasion will bring it to your memory: and yet how often have we deceived ourselves on these articles! How often have our hopes been vain! How often have you sent us empty away, even though we demanded so little! What will be done to-day? Who that knows a little of mankind, can flatter himself that a discourse intended, in regard to a great number, to change all, to reform all, to renew all, will be directed to its true design!

But, O God, there yet remains one resource, it is Thy grace, it is Thine aid, grace that we have a thousand times turned into lasciviousness, and which we have a thousand times rejected; yet after all assisting grace which we most humbly venture to implore. When we approach the enemy, we earnestly beseech Thee "teach our hands to war, and our fingers to fight!" When we did attack a town, we fervently besought Thee to render it accessible to us! Our prayers entered heaven, our enemies fled before us, Thou didst bring us into the strong city, and didst lead us into Edom. The walls of many a Jericho fell at the sound of our trumpets, at the sight of Thine ark, and the approach of Thy priest: but the old man is an enemy far more formidable than the best disciplined armies, and it is harder to conquer the passions than to beat down the walls of a city! O help us to subdue this old man, as Thou hast assisted us to overcome other enemies! Enable us to triumph over our passions as Thou hast enabled us to succeed in leveling the walls of a city! Stretch out Thy holy arm in our favor, in this Church as in the field of battle! So be the Protector both of the State and the Church, crown our efforts with such success that we may offer the most noble songs of praise to Thy glory. Amen.

DISCOURSE FIFTY-FIFTH.

ALEXANDER VINET.

The "Chalmers of Switzerland," as Vinet has been styled by D'Aubigné and others, was born at Lausanne in 1797, and educated in his native town. At the early age of twenty years he was made Professor of the French language in the University of Basel, and not long after was ordained at Lausanne; where, in 1837, he was appointed Professor of Theology in the Institution where he had been educated. In this office he remained till the time of his death, the 4th of May, 1847.

Vinet was a champion of evangelical orthodoxy, a brilliant preacher, a profound philosopher, and an ardent Christian. Many of his discourses and essays were translated into English in this country, some years since, by the Rev. R. Turnbull, D.D., and have obtained a wide popularity. A critic has said of these discourses, "We scarcely know whether to praise most the brilliancy of the author, or of the translator." Mr. Chase, in his "Modern French Literature," says of Vinet's works, "They unite the extensive erudition and elevated views which characterize the writers beyond the Rhine with the charms of style, the exquisite *Atticism*, which belong to the writers of France." He adds that "no master of the French language, since the days of Pascal, has presented a more perfect combination of high inellectual and moral endowments." The following discourse is worthy of Vinet's reputation. A paragraph in the beginning, with reference to a previous discourse, is omitted.

THE MYSTERIES OF CHRISTIANITY.

"Things which have not entered into the heart of man."—1 Cor. ii. 9.

"I do not comprehend, therefore I do not believe." "The Gospel is full of mysteries, therefore I do not receive the Gospel:"—Such is one of the favorite arguments of infidelity. To see how much is made of this, and what confidence it inspires, we might believe it solid, or, at least, specious; but it is neither the one nor the other; it will not bear the slightest attention, the most superficial examination of reason; and if it still enjoys some favor in the world, this is but a proof of the lightness of our judgments upon things worthy of our most serious attention.

Upon what, in fact, does this argument rest? Upon the claim of comprehending every thing in the religion which God has offered or could offer us. A claim equally *unjust*, *unreasonable*, *useless*. This we proceed to develop.

1. In the first place, it is an *unjust* claim. It is to demand of God what He does not owe us. To prove this, let us suppose that God has given a religion to man, and let us further suppose that religion to be the Gospel: for this absolutely changes nothing to the argument. We may believe that God was free, at least, with reference to us, to give us or not to give us a religion; but it must be admitted that in granting it He contracts engagements to us, and that the first favor lays Him under a necessity of conferring other favors. For this is merely to say that God must be consistent, and that He finishes what He has begun. Since it is by a written revelation He manifests His designs respecting us, it is necessary He should fortify that revelation by all the authority which would at least determine us to receive it; it is necessary He should give us the means of judging whether the men who speak to us in His name are really sent by Him; in a word, it is necessary we should be assured that the Bible is truly the word of God.

It would not indeed be necessary that the conviction of each of us should be gained by the same kind of evidence. Some shall be led to Christianity by the historical or external arguments; they shall prove to themselves the truth of the Bible as the truth of all history is proved; they shall satisfy themselves that the books of which it is composed are certainly those of the times and of the authors to which they are ascribed. This settled, they shall compare the prophecies contained in these ancient documents with the events that have happened in subsequent ages; they shall assure themselves of the reality of the miraculous facts related in these books, and shall thence infer the necessary intervention of Divine power, which alone disposes the forces of nature, and can alone interrupt or modify their action. Others, less fitted for such investigations, shall be struck with the internal evidence of the Holy Scriptures. Finding there the state of their souls perfectly described, their wants fully expressed, and the true remedies for their maladies completely indicated; struck with a character of truth and candor which nothing can imitate; in fine, feeling themselves in their inner nature moved, changed, renovated, by the mysterious influence of these Holy Writings, they shall acquire, by such means, a conviction of which they can not always give an account to others, but which is not the less legitimate, irresistible, and immovable. Such is the double road by which an entrance is gained into the asylum of faith. But it was due from the wisdom of God, from His justice, and, we venture to say it, from the honor of His government, that He should open to man this double road; for, if He desired man to be saved by knowledge, on the same principle He engaged Himself to furnish him the means of knowledge.

Behold, whence come the obligations of the Deity with reference to us—which obligations He has fulfilled. Enter on this double method of proof. Interrogate history, time and places, respecting the authenticity of the Scriptures; grasp all the difficulties, sound all the objections; do not permit yourselves to be too easily convinced; be the more severe upon that book, as it professes to contain the sovereign rule of your life, and the disposal of your destiny; you are permitted to do this, nay, you are encouraged to do it, provided you proceed to the investigation with the requisite capacities and with pure intentions. Or, if you prefer another method, examine, with an honest heart, the contents of the Scriptures; inquire, while you run over the words of Jesus, if ever man spake like this Man; inquire if the wants of your soul, long deceived, and the anxieties of your spirit, long cherished in vain, do not, in the teaching and work of Christ, find that satisfaction and repose which no wisdom was ever able to procure you; breathe, if I may thus express myself, that perfume of truth, of candor and purity, which exhales from every page of the Gospel; see, if, in all these respects, it does not bear the undeniable seal of inspiration and divinity. Finally, test it, and if the Gospel produces upon you a contrary effect, return to the books and the wisdom of men, and ask of them what Christ has not been able to give you.

But if, neglecting these two ways, made accessible to you, and trodden by the feet of ages, you desire, before all, that the Christian religion should, in every point, render itself comprehensible to your mind, and complacently strip itself of all mysteries; if you wish to penetrate beyond the vail, to find there, not the aliment which gives life to the soul, but that which would gratify your restless curiosity, I maintain that you raise against God a claim the most indiscreet, the most rash and unjust; for He has never engaged, either tacitly or expressly, to discover to you the secret which your eye craves; and such audacious importunity is fit only to excite His indignation.

He has given you what He owed you, more indeed than He owed you;—the rest is with Himself.

If a claim so unjust could be admitted, where, I ask you, would be the limit of your demands? Already you require more from God than He has accorded to angels; for these eternal mysteries which trouble you—the harmony of the Divine prescience with human freedom—the origin of evil and its ineffable remedy—the incarnation of the eternal Word—the relations of the God-man with his Father—the atoning virtue of His sacrifice—the regenerating efficacy of the Spirit-comforter—all these things are secrets, the knowledge of which is hidden from angels themselves, who, according to the word of the Apostle, stoop to explore their depths, and can not.

If you reproach the Eternal for having kept the knowledge of these Divine mysteries to Himself, why do you not reproach Him for the thousand other limits He has prescribed to you? Why not reproach Him for not having given you wings like a bird, to visit the regions which, till now, have been scanned only by your eyes? Why not reproach Him for not giving you, besides the five senses with which you are provided, ten other senses which He has perhaps granted to other creatures, and which procure for them perceptions of which you have no idea? Why not, in fine, reproach Him for having caused the darkness of night to succeed the brightness of day invariably on the earth? Ah! you do not reproach Him for that. You love that night which brings rest to so many fatigued bodies and weary spirits; which suspends, in so many wretches, the feeling of grief;—that night, during which orphans, slaves, and criminals cease to be, because over all their misfortunes and sufferings it spreads, with the opiate of sleep, the thick vail of oblivion; you love that night which, peopling the deserts of the heavens with ten thousand stars, not known to the day, reveals the infinite to our ravished imagination.

Well, then, why do you not, for a similar reason, love the night of divine mysteries—night, gracious and salutary, in which reason humbles itself, and finds refreshment and repose; where the darkness even is a revelation; where one of the principal attributes of God, immensity, discovers itself much more fully to our mind; where, in fine, the tender relations He has permitted us to form with Himself, are guarded from all admixture of familiarity by the thought that the Being who has humbled Himself to us, is, at the same time, the inconceivable God who reigns before all time, who includes in Himself all existences and all conditions of existence, the center of all thought, the law of all law, the supreme and final reason of every thing! So that, if you are just, instead of reproaching Him for the secrets of religion, you will bless Him that He has enveloped you in mysteries.

2. But this claim is not only unjust toward God; it is also in itself exceedingly *unreasonable.*

What is religion? It is God putting Himself in communication with man; the Creator with the creature, the infinite with the finite. There already, without going further, is a mystery; a mystery common to all religious, impenetrable in all, religions. If then, every thing which is a mystery offends you, you are arrested on the threshold, I will not say of Christianity, but of every religion; I say, even of that religion which is called *natural*, because it rejects revelation and miracles; for it necessarily implies, at the very least, a connection, a communication of some sort between God and man—the contrary being equivalent to atheism. Your claim prevents you from having any belief; and because you have not been willing to be Christians, it will not allow you to be Deists.

"It is of no consequence," you say, "we pass over that difficulty; we suppose between God and us connections we can not conceive; we admit them because they are necessary to us. But this is the only step we are willing to take: we have already yielded too much to yield more." Say more—say you have granted too much not to grant much more, not to grant all! You have consented to admit, without comprehending it, that there may be communications from God to you, and from you to God. But consider well what is implied in such a supposition. It implies that you are dependent, and yet free—this you do not comprehend;—it implies that the Spirit of God can make itself understood by your spirit—this you do not comprehend;—it implies that your prayers may exert an influence on the will of God—this you do not comprehend. It is necessary you should receive all these mysteries, in order to establish with God connections the most vague and superficial, and by the very side of which atheism is placed. And when, by a powerful effort with yourselves you have done so much as to admit these mysteries, you recoil from those of Christianity! You have accepted the foundation, and refuse the superstructure! You have accepted the principle and refuse the details! You are right, no doubt, so soon as it is proved to you, that the religion which contains these mysteries does not come from God; or rather, that these mysteries contain contradictory ideas. But you are not justified in denying them, for the sole reason that you do not understand them;

and the reception you have given to the first kind of mysteries compels you, by the same rule, to receive the others.

This is not all. Not only are mysteries an inseparable part, nay, the very substance of all religion, but it is absolutely impossible that a true religion should not present a great number of mysteries. If it is true, it ought to teach more truths respecting God and Divine things than any other, than all others together; but each of these truths has a relation to the infinite, and by consequence borders on a mystery. How should it be otherwise in religion, when it is thus in nature itself? Behold God in nature! The more He gives us to contemplate, the more He gives to astonish us. To each creature is attached some mystery. A grain of sand is an abyss! Now, if the manifestation which God has made of Himself in nature suggests to the observer a thousand questions which can not be answered, how will it be, when to that first revelation, another is added; when God the Creator and Preserver reveals Himself under new aspects as God the Reconciler and Saviour? Shall not mysteries multiply with discoveries? With each new day shall we not see associated a new night? And shall we not purchase each increase of knowledge with an increase of ignorance? Has not the doctrine of grace, so necessary, so consoling, alone opened a profound abyss, into which, for eighteen centuries, rash and restless spirits have been constantly plunging?

It is, then, clearly necessary that Christianity should, more than any other religion, be mysterious, simply because it is true. Like mountains, which, the higher they are, cast the larger shadows, the Gospel is the more obscure and mysterious on account of its sublimity. After this, will you be indignant that you do not comprehend every thing in the Gospel? It would, forsooth, be a truly surprising thing if the ocean could not be held in the hollow of your hand, or uncreated wisdom within the limits of your intelligence! It would be truly unfortunate if a finite being could not embrace the infinite, and that, in the vast assemblage of things there should be some idea beyond its grasp! In other words, it would be truly unfortunate if God Himself should know something which man does not know!

Let us acknowledge, then, how insensate is such a claim when it is made with reference to religion.

But let us also recollect how much, in making such a claim, we shall be in opposition to ourselves; for the submission we dislike in religion, we cherish in a thousand other things. It happens to us every day to admit things we do not understand, and to do so without the least repugnance. The things, the knowledge of which is refused us, are much more numerous than we perhaps think. Few diamonds are perfectly pure; still fewer truths are perfectly clear. The union of our soul with our body is a mystery—our most familiar emotions and affections are a mystery—the action of thought and of will is a mystery—our very existence is a mystery. Why do we admit these various facts? Is it because we understand them? No, certainly, but because they are self-evident, and because they are truths by which we live. In religion we have no other course to take. We ought to know whether it is true and necessary; and once convinced of these two points, we ought, like the angels, to submit to the necessity of being ignorant of some things. And why do we not submit cheerfully to a privation which, after all, is not one?

3. To desire the knowledge of mysteries is to desire what is utterly *useless;* it is to raise, as I have said before, a claim the most vain and idle. What, in reference to us is the object of the Gospel? Evidently to regenerate and save us. But it attains this end wholly by the things it reveals. Of what use would it be to know those it conceals from us? We possess the knowledge which can enlighten our consciences, rectify our inclinations, renew our hearts; what should we gain if we possessed other knowledge? It infinitely concerns us to know that the Bible is the word of God; does it equally concern us to know in what way the holy men that wrote it were moved by the Holy Ghost? It is of infinite moment to us to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, need we know precisely in what way the Divine and human natures are united in His adorable person? It is of infinite importance for us to know that unless we are born again we can not enter the kingdom of God, and that the Holy Spirit is the Author of the new birth—shall we be further advanced if we know the Divine process by which that wonder is performed? Is it not enough for us to know the truths that save? Of what use, then, would it be to know those which have not the slightest bearing on our salvation? "Though I know all mysteries," says St. Paul, "and have not charity, I am nothing." St. Paul was content not to know, provided he had charity; shall not we, following his example, be content also without knowledge, provided that, like him, we have charity, that is to say, life?

But some one will say "If the knowledge of mysteries is really without influence on our salvation, why have they been indicated to us at all?" What if it should be to teach us not to be too prodigal of our *wherefores!* if it should be to serve as an exercise of our faith, a test of our submission! But we will not stop with such a reply.

Observe, I pray you, in what manner the mysteries of which you complain have taken their part in religion. You readily perceive they are not by themselves, but associated with truths which have a direct bearing on your salvation. They contain them, they serve to envelop them; but they are not themselves the truths that save. It is with these mysteries as it is with the vessel that contains a medicinal draught—it is not the vessel that cures, but the draught; yet the draught could not be presented without the vessel. Thus each truth that saves is contained in a mystery, which, in itself, has no power to save. So the great work of expiation is necessarily attached to the incarnation of the Son of God, which is a mystery; so the sanctifying graces of the new covenant are necessarily connected with the effluence of the Holy Spirit, which is a mystery; so, too, the divinity of religion finds a seal and an attestation in the miracles, which are mysteries. Every where the light is born from darkness, and darkness accompanies the light. These two orders of truths are so united, so interlinked, that you can not remove the one without the other, and each of the mysteries you attempt to tear from religion would carry with it one of the truths which bear directly on your regeneration and salvation. Accept the mysteries, then, not as truths that can save you, but as the necessary conditions of the merciful work of the Lord in your behalf.

The true point at issue in reference to religion is this:—Does the religion which is proposed to us, change the heart, unite to God, prepare for heaven? If Christianity produces these effects, we will leave the enemies of the cross free to revolt against its mysteries, and tax them with absurdity. The Gospel, we will say to them, is then an absurdity; you have discovered it. But behold what a new species of absurdity that certainly is which attaches man to all his duties, regulates human life better than all the doctrines of sages, plants in his bosom harmony, order, and peace, causes him joyfully to fulfill all the offices of civil life, renders him better fitted to live, better fitted to die, and which, were it generally received, would be the support and safeguard of society! Cite to us, among all human absurdities, a single one which produces such effects. If that "foolishness" we preach produces effects like these, is it not natural to conclude that it is truth itself? And if these things have not entered the heart of man, it is not because they are absurd, but because they are Divine.

Make, my readers, but a single reflection. You are obliged to confess that none of the religions which man may invent can satisfy his wants, or save his soul. Thereupon you have a choice to make. You will either reject them all as insufficient and false, and seek for nothing better, since man can not invent better, and then you will abandon to chance, to caprice of temperament or of opinion, your moral life and future destiny; or you will adopt that other religion which some treat as folly, and it will render you holy and pure, blameless in the midst of a perverse generation, united to God by love, and to your brethren by charity, indefatigable in doing good, happy in life, happy in death. Suppose, after all this, you shall be told that this religion is false; but, meanwhile, it has restored in you the image of God, re-established your primitive connections with that great Being, and put you in a condition to enjoy life and the happiness of heaven. By means of it you have become such that at the last day, it is impossible that God should not receive you as His children and make you partakers of His glory. You are made fit for paradise, nay, paradise has commenced for you even here, because you love. This religion has done for you what all religion proposes, and what no other has realized. Nevertheless, by the supposition, it is false! And what more could it do, were it true? Rather do you not see that this is a splendid proof of its truth? Do you not see that it is impossible that a religion which leads to God should not come from God, and that the absurdity is precisely that of supposing that you can be regenerated by a falsehood?

Suppose that afterward, as at the first, you do not comprehend. It seems necessary, then, you should be saved by the things you do not comprehend. Is that a misfortune? Are you the less saved? Does it become you to demand from God an explanation of an obscurity which does not injure you, when, with reference to every thing essential, He has been prodigal of light? The first disciples of Jesus, men without culture and learning, received truths which they did not comprehend, and spread them through the world. A crowd of sages and men of genius have received, from the hands of these poor people, truths which they comprehended no more than they. The ignorance of the one, and the science of the other, have been equally docile. Do, then, as the ignorant and the wise have done. Embrace with affection those truths which have never entered into your heart, and which will save you. Do not lose, in vain discussions, the time which is gliding away, and which is bearing you into the cheering or appalling light of eternity. Hasten to be saved. Love now; one day you will know. May the Lord Jesus prepare you for that period of light, of repose, and of happiness!

Sketch of the Scottish Pulpit.

THE SCOTTISH PULPIT.

The history of the Scottish pulpit naturally divides itself into three periods: first, that between the Reformation and the Revolution in 1689; second, that between the Revolution and the ecclesiastical Disruption in 1843; and third, the modern period, or that from the Disruption to the present time.

Previous to the time of the Reformation, the pulpit in Scotland, like that of other countries in Europe, was prostrate. The preacher had been supplanted by the priest, and the pulpit demolished to make way for the altar. Teachers of the true faith, probably as early as the last of the second century, had there instructed the people. The Culdees, or refugee-servants-of-God, as their name seems to imply, had early fled from persecution, and certainly, as soon as the sixth century, had made the island of Iona their home, and the seat of their Christian influence. Here they prosecuted their ministry, first among the warlike Scots and Picts, and then among the pagan Saxons, with no little success. But they soon began to melt away before the encroachments of the Roman pontiff, to whom they yielded up their spiritual liberty in 1176, and, a century later, were finally suppressed.

Thenceforward the reign of popery was complete. Scotland was a rich inheritance of the see of Rome. Half the kingdom belonged to the clergy. From the power of the priesthood it is easy to estimate the power of the pulpit. It was imbecile for good. Gorged with wealth, reveling in luxury and sensual indulgence, what cared the clergy for things spiritual? Had they possessed the disposition to reform the people, they had lacked the power, from ignorance. Even the bishops knew little of the Scriptures. "I thank God," said the Bishop of Dunkeld, "that I have lived well these many years, and never knew either the Old or the New Testament." The chief care of the ministry was to preserve unbroken the spell of darkness that bound the whole nation. And they had long been successful. An act of the Scottish Parliament in 1525, prohibiting the importation of Luther's writings, alleged that that country had always "bene clene of all sic filth and vice!"

But that is a long night which knows no dawn. The very act referred to is suggestive. It proved the uprising of a better day. The doctrines of the Culdees furnished points of connection for those of the

Reformation. The disciples of Wickliffe and Huss make their appearance. Patrick Hamilton steps forward; and, later still, George Wishart, and others of kindred spirit. In vain the demon of persecution rears his bloody head. The brazen ball with which the mouth of Paul Craw is stopped, that he preach not while burning at the stake, does not silence the voice which speaks when one is dead. The flames that blaze around the body of the brilliant young Hamilton are but the emblematic response of his dying interrogation—"How long, O Lord, shall darkness cover this realm?" The sounding trumpet that gives signal to kindle the pile in the midst of which stands the mild, the gentle, the patient, the eloquent Wishart, is but the symbol of the trumpet voice of the prophetic angel, whose everlasting Gospel is about to be proclaimed throughout the whole kingdom.

The lion-souled Knox rises up, full armed and equipped, as from the dust of his martyred brethren. His words of thunder send consternation among the king's enemies. The God of Israel is by his side. He raises up helpers, and makes strong their arms. Great is their success. Images, altars, relics, shrines are broken in pieces, and, in some cases, religious houses, in order that, to use their own energetic terms, "by pulling down the nests, the rooks might all fly away." Never was a work more thorough and complete. Scarcely a vestige of the "auld scarlet mither" is left to flaunt in the air. High and low, rich and poor, come under the strange influence. The dust is brushed from off the long-neglected Bible; the schools are opened; forgotten tongues give forth divine and human learning; and princes and cities are seen "trooping apace to the new-erected banner of salvation."

In 1560, notwithstanding the work of reform had encountered the fiercest opposition from the papists, the Scottish Parliament formally abrogated and annulled the papal jurisdiction; and in 1592, by an Act of Parliament, the Protestant religion—embodied according to the Articles of John Knox—was established, and taken under the protection and patronage of the State.

And how was this mighty change effected? Pre-eminently, under God, by the *pulpit*. Of books there were then but few. Of modern forms and agencies for advancing the Gospel, there were none. Preaching was almost the sole instrumentality. If, then, we were to characterize in one word the pulpit of the Scottish Reformers, we would give to it the attribute of POWER. Not of finish; not of beauty; not of rhetorical perfection; but of *strength*, *solidity*, *power;* fitly symbolized in the real old six-sided pulpit of John Knox, still preserved in a museum at Edinburg, made of *solid oak*.

But fearful storms were about to beat upon that tower of strength, and put to the test the basis upon which it reposed. The seventeenth century had but just opened when efforts were made, by King James, to enforce episcopacy upon the churches. During this century it was twice declared to be the established religion. This gave rise to struggles for its resistance, by the clergy and the people, which, for incidents of thrilling interest and sublime importance, are almost without a parallel. Those incidents can not be here minutely narrated. The proroguing, by the king, of the meetings of the Presbyterian Assembly; the ejection from their pulpits and their livings of such ministers as could not in conscience conform to the new *régime*, believing it to be essentially papal, though professedly prelatic; their cruel imprisonments; their inhuman slaughter in conflicts arising out of the assertion of their rights; the temporary relief by the accession of Cromwell to the British throne; the blighting of cherished expectations by the accession of Charles the Second in 1660; his efforts to overturn the whole work of the Reformation; the driving to the fields of godly ministers who persisted in preaching when expelled from their pulpits; the terrible enginery of persecution brought to bear in the "killing time," beginning with the year 1684; the slight relief by the death of Charles; and finally the happy termination of the series of outrages and wrongs by the *Revolution* in 1688, when the fate of the House of Stuart was sealed, and the good William and Mary came to the throne—all these events are but a small part of the shifting scene that made up the wonderful drama of Scottish history during the period of which we speak, and contributed to give form to the preaching of the times. It is computed that eighteen thousand people suffered death, or the utmost hardships, for their religion, during this period, hundreds of whom were ministers. About five thousand were murdered in cold blood.

There is one event, however, which must not be passed without special mention; it is the subscribing of the COVENANT, at Edinburg, in the year 1638. It has been remarked with truth, that never, except among God's peculiar people, the Jews, did any national transaction equal, in moral and religious sublimity, that which was displayed by Scotland on the great day of her national Covenant.

The event is thus described by Mr. Aiton, in his life of Henderson. "The Presbyterians had crowded to Edinburg to the number of sixty thousand, and on the 28th of February a fast had been appointed in the Grey Friars' Church. Long before the appointed hour, the venerable church and the large open space around it were filled with Presbyterians from every quarter of Scotland. At two o'clock Rothes, Loudon, Henderson, Dickson, and Johnston arrived with a copy of the Covenant ready for signature. Henderson constituted the meeting by prayer 'verrie powerfullie and pertinentlie' to the purpose on hand. The Covenant was read by Johnston, 'out of a fair parchment about an elne squair.' When the reading was finished, there was a pause, and silence still as death. Rothes broke it by requesting that if any of them had objections to offer he would now be heard. 'Few come, and these few proposed but few doubts, which were soon resolved.' The venerable Earl of Sutherland stepped forward, and put the first name to the memorable document. After it had gone the round of the whole church, it was taken out to be signed by the crowd in the church-yard. Here it was spread before them like another roll of the prophets, upon a flat gravestone,* to be read and subscribed by as many as could get near it. Many in addition to their name wrote '*till death*,' and some even opened a vein and subscribed with their blood. The immense sheet, in a short time became so much crowded with names on both sides, and throughout its whole space, that there was not room left for a single additional signature. Zeal in the cause of Christ, and courage for the liberties of Scotland, warmed every breast. Joy was mingled with the expressions of some, and the voice of shouting arose from a few. But by far the greater number were deeply impressed with very different feelings. Most of them of all sorts wept bitterly for their defection from the Lord. And in testimony of his sincerity, every one confirmed his subscription by a solemn oath. With groans, and tears streaming down their faces, they all lifted up their right hands at once. When this awful appeal was made to the Searcher of hearts at the day of judgment, so great was the fear of again breaking the Covenant, that thousands of arms which had never trembled, even when drawing the sword on the eve of battle, were now loosened at every joint. After the oath had been administered, the people were powerfully enjoined to begin their personal reformation. At the conclusion, every body seemed to feel that a great measure of the Divine presence had accompanied the solemnities of the day, and with their hearts much comforted and strengthened for every duty, the enormous crowd retired about nine at night."

Copies of this Covenant were immediately sent to all parts of the kingdom, and before the end of April, there were few parishes of Scotland where it had not been signed by nearly all of competent age and character; thus making it truly a national Covenant.

As already intimated, the events of the period under review did much to give tone and character to the Scottish pulpit. The introduction of prelacy brought with it no slight modification of *doctrine;* so that instead of bearing the type of the creed of the great Reformer, public instruction now took the form, to a great extent, of Arminius. Especially the younger portion of the Scottish prelates emulated Laud in promulgating these sentiments, and denouncing the stiff tenets of the Presbyterians. And their discourses were generally the driest and most pedantic productions imaginable. The *papal* leaven had, also, been widely diffused; and what was still more deplorable, if possible, the lives of many of the prelatic ministers became corrupt, and their gross immoralities were a scandal to the sacred profession. Nevertheless, in some parts of the kingdom, and especially at particular intervals, a pure Gospel was preached, and piety flourished. For the concealed papacy, notwithstanding it came with royal authority and power, was, as we have seen, stoutly resisted. The act of Jenny Geddes, in hurling at the head of the surpliced dean in St. Giles, the stool on which she had been sitting near by, when he began to read the Liturgy, with the exclamation, "Villain! dost thou say mass at my lug?" was indicative of the stuff of which the bone and sinew of the Scottish people were made.

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* The identical grave-stone is still shown in Grey Friars' Church, Edinburg.—*Ed.*

Indeed the very persecutions to which the Presbyterians were subjected, wrought into their preaching some of the very best elements. They conspired to render them holy men, and enkindle their zeal for God and the truth. Add to this that they often preached with the expectation of a sudden surprise by their enemies, or of a legal arrest, and perhaps a summary conviction and death, and we can readily imagine the character of their preaching. Earnestness and tender concern for their flocks were the prevailing features. They were times that tried men's souls. The preachers spoke with bold and fervid eloquence, as standing upon the confines of the other world, and perhaps for the last time addressing their fellow-mortals, whose blood, with their's, might soon mingle on the trodden heath. The *places*, too, often inspired the sublimest sentiments. Driven out from their sanctuaries, the broad fields, arched by the canopy of heaven, were the temples of their devotions. There, in sight of upland moors, and frowning crags, and majestic mountains, and the clear or threatening skies, these servants of the Most High declared His messages, as in His very sight.

We are not called upon to endorse every tenet and every act of the famous old Covenanters. They particularly erred in confounding things civil and things sacred. But they were men of conscience, men of prayer, men of deep piety, men of courage and an unfaltering faith; and fearlessly, earnestly, affectionately, faithfully did they preach the word. All honor to the self-sacrificing spirit, the zeal, the valor, the spiritual championship of men who could say with Henderson, "We can *die*, but we can not forswear ourselves, and be false traitors to Christ!"

The way in which the Covenanters conducted their worship, when it was unmolested in their sanctuaries, must be sketched, especially as it obtained from the time of the Reformation, and, with some slight modification, has continued in the Scottish Presbyterian churches. Immediately on entering the pulpit, the minister kneeled down and began with prayer, the people generally kneeling also. It was customary, at some part of the service, to repeat the Lord's Prayer and the Doxology; but in other respects the worship was unfettered by forms, the officiating minister guiding the devotions of his flock, as Justin Martyr describes those of the primitive Christians, "according to his ability, without a prompter." Prayer being ended, the congregation joined in singing a portion of the Psalms—a part of the service in which they took great delight, and in which they were so well instructed that many of them could sing without the aid of a Psalm-book. The Psalm being sung, the minister offered up another short prayer, and then followed the sermon, which, having been succeeded by prayer and praise, the congregation were dismissed with the Apostolic blessing.*

We come, now, to the second period of the history of the Scottish pulpit; namely, that which falls between the Revolution in 1688 and the great disruption in 1843. Persecution had been brought to an end by the accession of William and Mary. The Act of Security, in 1707, effectually precluded direct interference on the part of the British Parliament with the Scottish Churches. But though delivered from outward molestation, the churches were destined to be subjected to an ordeal still more severe. Their appointed leaders were not adequate to the trial. The pulpit was sorely damaged. For the next century it displays more of learning and culture, but less of soundness and unanimity, in its instructions. It was the age of defections and internal dissensions. Faithful and earnest preachers there were; and the number of such was greatly augmented by the glorious revivals with which the churches were blessed, about the middle and at the conclusion of the eighteenth century. But it would seem these refreshings were vouchsafed that, by sipping of the brook by the way, the faithful might not become quite faint-hearted and exhausted; just as God has always been wont to revive anew the sacred life among His people before a season of searching trial. These and a few other bright spots in the history of the times, do but the more clearly reveal the dark background upon which they appear. The high-souled, martyr spirit of the previous centuries rapidly declined. The preaching, as a whole, lacked the strength and vigor of former days. Still more did it lack the clear and forcible enunciation of those sublime doctrines which were hurled, with such effect, by the Reformers and Covenanters against the hoary battlements of supersition and iniquity.

The causes which led to this decline in the power of the Scottish pulpit have been, in part, already intimated. The grand *germinal* source was the union of the Church with the State; the injurious results of which early began to be developed. To mention nothing else, this unnatural alliance superinduced, and finally grafted upon, the clerical office, attention to worldly pursuits. The minister in each parish came to be the organ of communication between his people and the *government*—and the consequent exactions and services of a secular nature impinged upon the study, and withdrew the pastor from prayer and the ministry of the word.† Moreover the soft and effeminate style of preaching, so common, at the time, in England, began to be adopted by the Scottish divines; an influence greatly extended by the large number of those who, either openly, or at heart, favored the views of the English Church. The unhappy ecclesiastical controversies of the time affected injuriously the pulpit. The celebrated "Marrow Controversy" arose upon the republication of Edward Fisher's book, by James Hog, minister of Carnock, in 1714, under the title of "*Marrow* of Modern Divinity;" the main point of dispute being as to whether the views inculcated were a fair exposition of the doctrines of grace, or whether, on the other hand, they tended to relax the obligations to holiness, and cherish a spirit of Antinomianism. Controversies arose, and at length divisions, as to the lawfulness or unlawfulness of the Burgher's oath, when taken by a Dissenter. Other troubles originated in attempts to discipline a class of Dissenters, known as Society-men, or *Cameronians*, who joined issue with the Church, mainly from its connection with the State; and others still about the matter of *patronage*. The preaching of Arminian and Pelagian doctrines by some of the ministers became also a ground of division, as to sentiment and legitimate action. Differences of opinion, having their origin in other sources, need not be instanced. It can not be questioned that these unfortunate controversies, though often conducted in a Christian spirit, greatly weakened the power of the pulpit. It became too often, like the platform of the Assemblies, the arena of debate; which diverted its influence, and relaxed its energies for good.

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* M'Crie's History of the Church of Scotland, p. 248.

† See Chalmers' Sermon on The Christian Ministry Secularized.

The prevalence of "Moderatism" also contributed directly and powerfully to the decline of pulpit power. This system had its origin in the combination which early took place, between the indulged ministers and the prelatic incumbents, who were introduced into the Church by the "Comprehension Scheme" of King William. The perfidious act of 1714, reimposing patronage, gave it growth and strength. This system early showed itself favorable to laxity of discipline and doctrine. Heresy excited from it little attention; the doctrines of grace, as held after the pattern of the Reformers, were condemned; and, at length, it boldly declared its principles to be worldly, and sought even to abolish the subscription to the Confession of Faith; besides opposing the extension of the Gospel at home, and prohibiting efforts to send it abroad. This system, at times, was wholly in the ascendency, and most dreary was its reign. Vital godliness declined; the remonstrances of faithful ministers were repressed, and themselves were, almost of necessity, driven out of the Church, while those who were heterodox and immoral were protected.* As a consequence, the pulpit became almost powerless. The preaching was legal and spiritless. Sermons became little else than carefully written essays, in exposition and support of an improved system of morality, styled the religion of the Gospel.

Such was the state of things, generally, at the close of the eighteenth century. The brilliant exceptions in the persons of such men as Erskine, Hunter, Davidson, Balfour, Freebairn, Johnstone, Nisbet and a few others, were but "the scattered stars that faintly break the gloom of a chill and misty night." In 1798, the eccentric, but earnest and godly Rowland Hill, visited Scotland, and upon his return published an extended statement, perhaps exaggerated, if not erroneous in some few particulars, concerning the state of religion and the kind of preaching in Scotland. In this statement he says, "The dispensation of mercy to fallen man by Jesus Christ is not the subject preached by the majority; but with some, a mangled Gospel, law and Gospel spliced together; with others, a mere hungry system of bare-weight morality; and with a third, what is still worse, a deliberate attack on all the truths they have engaged to uphold." "The cause of morality declines with the cause of the Gospel; and I fear the Scots, by far the best educated and best behaved people in the British dominions, will soon be no better than their neighbors."

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* See Hetherington's History of the Church of Scotland, vol. ii. pp. 362–3.

About the opening of the nineteenth century there was a decided decline of "Moderatism," which, with the great religious awakenings under Whitefield and others, that had occurred, contributed much to the elevation and strength of the pulpit. The earnest efforts of Andrew Thompson and Thomas Chalmers, and a few others, with the missionary movements of Dr. Duff, and the publication, by Dr. M'Crie, of the "Life of John Knox," and finally the revivals of the churches in the years of 1839 and 1840, exerted a decided influence in the same direction.

One event, however, was yet necessary to the highest power of the Scottish pulpit. It is that which opens the third great era in its history. We refer, of course, to the disruption in the national body, and the formation of the "Free Church of Scotland." Occasional secessions, from a variety of causes, had already taken place. Indeed the re-establishment of the Presbyterian form of Church government in 1690, in several of its features, was condemned by some of the leading spirits of the day.* But it was not until about the year 1830 that the lawfulness of a civil establishment of religion, in the form of a national Church, assumed the grave aspect of public controversy. From that time the advocates of the voluntary principle greatly increased in number and influence. Matters were fast approaching a crisis. The civil and the ecclesiastical courts were perpetually coming into collision. The struggles on the part of the Church to maintain her dignity and spirituality, and the supremacy of her glorious Head, were believed by many to be perfectly futile and hopeless. They must come out from the civil organizations and be wholly separate.

Preparations for the coming disruption had already been made. The time for action had now come. It was a lovely May-day (the 18th) of that bright year in the history of the Scottish churches and the Scottish pulpit.

The members of the General Assembly, and an anxious throng of

* See M'Kerrow's History of the Secession Church, p. 2, etc.

spectators, with the officials of royalty and rank, had crowded the Church of St. Andrew's, in Edinburg, when the moderator, after opening the meeting with solemn prayer, broke the dead silence that ensued, by declaring that owing to certain proceedings by her majesty's government, the ecclesiastical court could not be constituted, without a violation of the terms of union between the Church and State; and solemnly protested against proceeding further. Then reading a paper containing a formal statement of the reasons for complaint and secession, and laying it upon the table before the clerk, with a bow to the throne where sat the commissioner, he withdrew, closely followed by the noble band, who slowly and calmly retired to the spacious Tanfield Hall, the appointed place of meeting, leaving the opposite party in the confusion of amazement and utter dismay. Dr. Chalmers was called to the chair by acclamation, a Psalm was sung, a prayer was offered, and the First General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, was formally organized.* The number of signatures of adhering ministers and elders, which were taken on that day, was three hundred and eighty-six; additional names, subsequently taken, raised it to four hundred and seventy-four.

It is scarcely possible to conceive of any movement that should have more directly and powerfully operated upon the Scottish pulpit, than that now described. Not only the Free Church clergy, but those from whom they withdrew, and those of every branch of the Christian community, felt the impulse of a new life, and gave themselves with more earnestness, and greater success, to the upbuilding of the kingdom of Christ.

The present ministerial force of Scotland (exclusive, of course, of the one hundred and twenty-five Roman Catholic clergy) is made up of not far from two thousand eight hundred preachers. Without claiming entire accuracy, the following statement will afford an idea of their relative numbers, denominationally considered: There are about eleven hundred in the established or National Church; seven hundred and fifty in the Free Church; five hundred in the United or Associate Presbyterian Church (made up of different secession bodies); one hundred and thirty in the Episcopal; one hundred in the Baptist; about the same number in the Congregational, and thirty in the Methodist Churches, besides, say fifty or one hundred in other smaller bodies. Episcopacy has never flourished in Scotland. Indeed the same may be said of each of the several denominations, except the Presbyterian. The *doctrine* of the Scottish pulpit is, therefore, mainly Calvinistic, as it is usually called. On this point there is a singular unanimity. The greatest *efficiency* does not seem to lie in the direction of numbers and state patronage. The establishment was shorn of its strength, to a great extent, at the disruption; and being obliged to fill its pulpits as best it could, it has not, since that event, possessed the power of other days. In intellectual character and standing, the Free Church ministers evidently excel those of any other body. Perhaps, *as a class*, they are not inferior in sterling ability, to those of any other denomination in the world.

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* A minute and graphic account of this great movement may be found in the last volume of Hetherington's History of the Church of Scotland.

In *oratory*, or pulpit embellishments of any kind, the Scottish clergy certainly do not excel. Judging by their transatlantic productions, there is little or no effort at fine writing; and, if what appear to be reliable authorities are credited, there is even less attention to pulpit elocution.

In this respect they fall behind their English neighbors. It is a frequent remark in the mother-country, "If one wants to know *what* to say, he must go to Scotland; if he desires to know *how* to say it, he must go to England." To use the words of one of her own sons, "There is not a nation in Europe where public men are better *thinkers* and worse *speakers* than the Scottish nation. This little peninsula has produced more authors that are read and studied, more text-books that are introduced into foreign colleges and foreign libraries, and more great men in proportion to its territorial extent, and the number of its population, than any other country. Yet Scotland, though a land of poets, and metaphysicians, and historians, and theologians, and martyrs, is not a land of orators. Though the national education has elevated the Scottish mind, though the established religion of the country has infused a thorough moral element into the Scottish character, so that some of the best British statesmen, not to speak of the ministers at foreign courts, are Scottish, still Scotland has not furnished the bench, the bar, nor the pulpit, with *first* rate orators. This is one of the first things that strikes a foreigner on entering Scotland. There is an entire want of all the *graces*, with an ample supply of all the *gifts* of pulpit oratory. As a general thing the preachers of this country are more taken up with the *what* than with the *how*. There is a masculine power about the Scottish pulpit peculiar to itself. In most of their churches the *thought* is heavy and massive. The truth is sought after with great avidity, and wrapped up in every discourse, if not with tinseled ornament, certainly with golden sinew. It seems somewhat surprising, but so it is, that John Knox has left the impress of his noble nature, both external and internal, on the Scottish character. The pulpit of that country is destined to echo with the rude tones of the great Reformer's voice, and the people to see the uncouth, but vigorous gestures of the man, where, animated and warmed up to the welding-point, he produced and stereotyped every succeeding generation of Scottish preachers."*

The *method of sermonizing* in the Scottish pulpit is quite different from that of former days. The old method was at once expository, doctrinal, methodical, and impassioned. He who reads the sermons of Boston and the Erskines, for example, will find the several formal divisions, then numerous sub-divisions, and then almost any number of uses, inferences, and practical reflections; and even then several sermons on the same text. He will also find sound argument, and, particularly in *sacramental* sermons, much of unction and pathos, and impassioned appeal. Widely different is the present method. The expository form, which, for three centuries has done so much to indoctrinate and mold the Scottish nation, is still maintained to a great extent; but the modern discourses are not generally distributed into heads, and formally announced at the beginning. Oftentimes no divisions are marked in the whole sermon, and little or no strength is bestowed in the application—an obvious fault in most of the Scottish sermons with which we have met. Of late, the "blood earnestness" of Chalmers, as Dr. John M. Mason styled it, upon hearing him, has contributed to infuse more of that warmth and passion into the instruction of the pulpit which it formerly possessed.

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* Rev. R. Irvine, now of Hamilton, Canada West.

We close this sketch with the remark that if one seeks for proof of the *power* of the pulpit, let him examine the history of the land of John Knox. Nowhere else has the relation of the pulpit to the existing form of civilization been so manifest. Nowhere else have the collected energies of the kingdom of Christ been so powerfully brought to bear, by means of the pulpit, to resist the onset of error, and to fuse and mold the masses of society. The ruling element of civilization, from the beginning of the Reformation to the present time, (with some temporary interruptions), has been the *religious* element, rendered effective by *preaching*. And there is reason to believe that the future of the Scottish pulpit will not be unworthy of the past. Coming events may again test its strength. The present aggressions of the Roman pontiff in England, may, by possibility, compass the reacquisition of that bright jewel, which the hand of the fearless Knox plucked from his tiara. If so, it may appear, in the eloquent language of another, why God, through these troubled centuries, has been schooling a hardy, manly race among the hills and floods of Scotland: and, as the spirit of Bannockburn and Drumclog flames out into a loftier blaze of heroism than that which appalled the usurping Edward, or the bloody Claverhouse, the blue banner of the Crown and the Covenant will be seen floating over the hottest and deadliest field of that terrible conflict.

DISCOURSE FIFTY-SIXTH.

JOHN KNOX.

The great Reformer was born in Haddington, not far from Edinburg, of poor but honest parents, in the year 1505. Destined for the Church, he received a thorough collegiate education, and became an honest friar; but silently and unostentatiously he early adopted the principles of the Protestant Reformation. After this he spent a considerable time in teaching and pursuing his studies, when he was called, unexpectedly, to the preaching of the Word at St. Andrews. Here he began boldly to attack "papal idolatry," upon which he was seized by the authorities and sent a prisoner to France, in 1547, where he worked in the galleys as a slave. After two years he was set at liberty, and refusing a bishopric in England, retired to the Continent at the accession of Mary, residing chiefly at Geneva and Frankfort, but returned to Scotland in 1555, where he labored with indomitable perseverance and great success. A second time he went to Geneva, where he published his "First Blast of the Trumpet against the Regiment (government) of Women," directed principally against Mary of England, and Mary of Guise regent of Scotland, two miserable despots. He returned to Scotland in 1559, and, after seeing Protestantism triumph in his beloved country, died, 1572, poor in this world's goods, but rich in the hope of a blessed immortality.

As a preacher, Knox possessed most astonishing abilities. With the irresistible power of truth and of heaven, he took possession of the understanding, and captivated the affections. Undismayed by opposition, and unbribed by proffered favors, he overlooked all distinctions between high and low, and alike to the sovereign on the throne, and the poorest menial, preached repentance, and the need of a new heart. The multitude, not only, but the educated few were animated and influenced, if not convinced and convicted, by his rough but overwhelming eloquence.

There are numerous treatises, admonitions, exhortations, and letters extant of the Reformer's writings; but only one *sermon*, put forth by himself (that which is here given), though there are two besides which were issued after his death. Knox speaks of *this* in the preface, as the first thing of the kind he ever set forth. It was preached in the public audience of the church in Edinburg, the 19th of August, 1565. He was arrested for preaching it, called before the council, and finally forbidden to preach in Edinburg so long as the king and queen were in town. For this reason he wrote out the sermon after having preached it, to the end, as he says, that the enemies of God's truth might either note unto him wherein he had offended, or at least cease to condemn him, before convincing him by God's Word. It would be impossible for most readers to understand the preacher if left in the atrocious spelling and uncouth Scotch dialect of his time. The translation here adopted is that of the London Religious Tract Society. It will be seen that he "who never feared the face of man" could preach with somewhat of elegance as well as such prodigious power. The title is our own.

THE SOURCE AND BOUNDS OF KINGLY POWER.

"O Lord our God, other lords besides Thee have had dominion over us; but by Thee only will we make mention of Thy name. They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise: therefore hast Thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish. Thou hast increased the nation, O Lord, Thou hast increased the nation, Thou art glorified; Thou hast removed it far unto the ends of the earth. Lord, in trouble have they visited Thee, they poured out a prayer when Thy chastening was upon them," etc.—ISAIAH, xxvi. 13–16, etc.

As the skillful mariner (being master), having his ship tossed with a vehement tempest, and contrary winds, is compelled oft to traverse, lest that, either by too much resisting to the violence of the waves, his vessel might be overwhelmed; or by too much liberty granted, might be carried whither the fury of the tempest would, so that his ship should be driven upon the shore, and make shipwreck; even so doth our prophet Isaiah in this text, which now you have heard read. For he, foreseeing the great desolation that was decreed in the council of the Eternal, against Jerusalem and Judah, namely, that the whole people that bare the name of God should be dispersed; that the holy city should be destroyed; the temple wherein was the ark of the covenant, and where God had promised to give His own presence, should be burned with fire; and the king taken, his sons in his own presence murdered, his own eyes immediately after be put out; the nobility, some cruelly murdered, some shamefully led away captives; and finally the whole seed of Abraham rased, as it were, from the face of the earth—the prophet, I say, fearing these horrible calamities, doth, as it were, sometimes suffer himself, and the people committed to his charge, to be carried away with the violence of the tempest, without further resistance than by pouring forth his and their dolorous complaints before the majesty of God, as in the thirteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth verses of this present text we may read. At other times he valiantly resists the desperate tempest, and pronounces the fearful destruction of all such as trouble the Church of God; which he pronounces that God will multiply, even when it appears utterly to be exterminated. But because there is no final rest to the whole body till the Head return to judgment, He exhorts the afflicted to patience, and promises a visitation whereby the wickedness of the wicked shall be disclosed, and finally recompensed in their own bosoms.

These are the chief points of which, by the grace of God, we intend more largely at this present to speak:

First, The prophet saith, "O Lord our God, other lords besides Thee have ruled us."

This, no doubt, is the beginning of the dolorous complaint, in which he complains of the unjust tyranny that the poor afflicted Israelites sustained during the time of their captivity. True it is that the prophet was gathered to his fathers in peace, before this came upon the people: for a hundred years after his decease the people were not led away captive; yet he, foreseeing the assurance of the calamity, did beforehand indite and dictate unto them the complaint, which afterward they should make. But at the first sight it appears that the complaint has but small weight; for what new thing was it that other lords than God in His own person ruled them, seeing that such had been their government from the beginning? For who knows not that Moses, Aaron, and Joshua, the judges, Samuel, David, and other godly rulers, were men, and not God; and so other lords than God ruled them in their greatest prosperity?

For the better understanding of this complaint, and of the mind of the prophet, we must, *first*, observe from whence all authority flows; and *secondly*, to what end powers are appointed by God: which two points being discussed, we shall better understand what lords and what authority rule beside God, and who they are in whom God and His merciful presence rules.

The *first* is resolved to us by the words of the Apostle, saying, "There is no power but of God." David brings in the eternal God speaking to judges and rulers, saying, "I have said, ye are gods, and sons of the Most High." And Solomon, in the person of God, affirmeth the same, saying, "By Me kings reign, and princes discern the things that are just." From which place it is evident that it is neither birth, influence of stars, election of people, force of arms, nor, finally, whatsoever can be comprehended under the power of nature, that makes the distinction betwixt the superior power and the inferior, or that establishes the royal throne of kings; but it is the only and perfect ordinance of God, who willeth His terror, power, and majesty, partly to shine in the thrones of kings, and in the faces of judges, and that for the profit and comfort of man. So that whosoever would study to deface the order of government that God has established, and allowed by His holy word, and bring in such a confusion that no difference should be betwixt the upper powers and the subjects, does nothing but avert and turn upside down the very throne of God, which He wills to be fixed here upon earth; as in the end and cause of this ordinance more plainly shall appear: which is the *second* point we have to observe, for the better understanding of the prophet's words and mind.

The end and cause then, why God imprints in the weak and feeble flesh of man this image of His own power and majesty, is not, to puff up flesh in opinion of itself; neither yet that the heart of him that is exalted above others should be lifted up by presumption and pride, and so despise others; but that he should consider he is appointed lieutenant to One, whose eyes continually watch upon him, to see and examine how he behaves himself in his office. St. Paul, in few words, declares the end wherefore the sword is committed to the powers, saying, "It is to the punishment of the wicked doers, and unto the praise of such as do well."

Of which words it is evident that the sword of God is not committed to the hand of man to use as it pleases him, but only to punish vice and maintain virtue, that men may live in such society as is acceptable before God. And this is the true and only cause why God has appointed powers in this earth.

For such is the furious rage of man's corrupt nature that, unless severe punishment were appointed and put in execution upon malefactors, better it were that man should live among brutes and wild beasts than among men. But at this present I dare not enter into the descriptions of this common-place; for so should I not satisfy the text, which by God's grace I purpose to explain. This only by the way—I would that such as are placed in authority should consider whether they reign and rule by God, so that God rules them; or if they rule without, besides, and against God, of whom our prophet here complains.

If any desire to take trial of this point, it is not hard; for Moses, in the election of judges, and of a king, describes not only what persons shall be chosen to that honor, but also gives to him that is elected and chosen the rule by which he shall try himself, whether God reign in him or not, saying, "When he shall sit upon the throne of his kingdom, he shall write to himself an exemplar of this law, in a book by the priests and Levites; it shall be with him, and he shall read therein, all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, and to keep all the words of His law, and these statutes, that he may do them; that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left."

The same is repeated to Joshua, in his inauguration to the government of the people, by God Himself, saying, "Let not the book of this law depart from thy mouth, but meditate in it day and night, that thou mayest keep it, and do according to all that which is written in it. For then shall thy way be prosperous, and thou shall do prudently."

The *first* thing then that God requires of him who is called to the honor of a king, is, The knowledge of His will revealed in His word.

The *second* is, An upright and willing mind, to put in execution such things as God commands in His law, without declining to the right, or to the left hand.

Kings, then, have not an absolute power to do in their government what pleases them, but their power is limited by God's word; so that if they strike where God has not commanded, they are but murderers; and if they spare where God has commanded to strike, they and their throne are criminal and guilty of the wickedness which abounds upon the face of the earth, for lack of punishment.

O that kings and princes would consider what account shall be craved of them, as well of their ignorance and misknowledge of God's will as for the neglecting of their office! But now to return to the words of the prophet. In the person of the whole people he complains unto God that the Babylonians (whom he calls "other lords besides God," both because of their ignorance of God and by reason of their cruelty and inhumanity) had long ruled over them in great rigor, without pity or compassion upon the ancient men and famous matrons; for they, being mortal enemies to the people of God, sought by all means to aggravate their yoke, yea, utterly to exterminate the memory of them, and of their religion, from the face of the earth. * * * *

Hereof it is evident that their disobedience unto God and unto the voices of the prophets was the source of their destruction. Now have we to take heed how we should use the good laws of God; that is, His will revealed unto us in His Word; and that order of justice which, by Him, for the comfort of man, is established among men. There is no doubt but that obedience is the most acceptable sacrifice unto God, and that which above all things He requires; so that when He manifests Himself by His Word, men should follow according to their vocation and commandment. Now so it is that God, by that great Pastor our Lord Jesus, now manifestly in His Word calls us from all impiety, as well of body as of mind, to holiness of life, and to His spiritual service; and for this purpose He has erected the throne of His mercy among us, the true preaching of His word, together with the right administration of His sacraments; but what our obedience is, let every man examine his own conscience, and consider what statutes and laws we would have to be given unto her.

Wouldst thou, O Scotland! have a king to reign over thee in justice, equity, and mercy? Subject thou thyself to the Lord thy God, obey His commandments, and magnify thou the Word that calleth unto thee, "This is the way, walk in it;" and if thou wilt not, flatter not thyself; the same justice remains this day in God to punish thee, Scotland, and thee Edinburg especially, which before punished the land of Judah and the city of Jerusalem. Every realm or nation, saith the prophet Jeremiah, that likewise offendeth, shall be likewise punished, but if thou shalt see impiety placed in the seat of justice above thee, so that in the throne of God (as Solomon complains) reigns nothing but fraud and violence, accuse thine own ingratitude and rebellion against God; for that is the only cause why God takes away "the strong man and the man of war, the judge and the prophet, the prudent and the aged, the captain and the honorable, the counselor and the cunning artificer; and I will appoint, saith the Lord, children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them. Children are extortioners of my people, and women have rule over them."

If these calamities, I say, apprehend us, so that we see nothing but the oppression of good men and of all godliness, and that wicked men without God reign above us; let us accuse and condemn ourselves, as the only cause of our own miseries. For if we had heard the voice of the Lord our God, and given upright obedience unto the same, God would have multiplied our peace, and would have rewarded our obedience before the eyes of the world. But now let us hear what the prophet saith further: "The dead shall not live," saith he, "neither shall the tyrants, nor the dead arise, because Thou hast visited and scattered them, and destroyed all their memory."

From this fourteenth verse unto the end of the nineteenth, it appears that the prophet observes no order; yea, that he speaks things directly repugning* one to another; for, *first*, he saith, "The dead shall not live;" afterward he affirms, "Thy dead men shall live." *Secondly*, he saith, "Thou hast visited and scattered them, and destroyed all their memory." Immediately after, he saith, "Thou hast increased Thy nation, O Lord, Thou hast increased Thy nation. They have visited Thee, and have poured forth a prayer before Thee."

Who, I say, would not think that these are things not only spoken without good order and purpose, but also manifestly repugning one to another? For to live, and not to live, to be so destroyed that no memorial remains, and to be so increased that the coasts of the earth shall be replenished, seems to impart plain contradiction. For removing of this doubt, and for better understanding the prophet's mind, we must observe, that the prophet had to do with divers sorts of men; he had to do with the conjured† and manifest enemies of God's people, the Chaldeans or Babylonians; even so, such as profess Christ Jesus have to do with the Turks and Saracens. He had to do with the seed of Abraham, whereof there were three sorts. The ten tribes were all degenerated from the true worshiping of God and corrupted with idolatry, as this day are our pestilent papists in all realms and nations; there rested only the tribe of Judah at Jerusalem, where the form of true religion was observed, the law taught, and the ordinances of God outwardly kept. But yet there were in that body, I mean in the body of the visible Church, a great number that were hypocrites, as this day yet are among us that profess the Lord Jesus, and have refused papistry; also not a few that were licentious livers; some that turned their back to God, that is, had forsaken all true religion; and some that lived a most abominable life, as Ezekiel saith in his vision; and yet there were some godly, as a few wheat-corns oppressed‡ and hid among the multitude of chaff: now, according to this diversity, the prophet keeps divers purposes, and yet in most perfect order.

And first, after the first part of the complaint of the afflicted as we have heard, in vehemency of spirit he bursts forth against all the proud enemies of God's people, against all such as trouble them, and against all such as mock and forsake God, and saith, "The dead shall not live, the proud giants shall not rise; Thou hast scattered them, and destroyed their memorial." In which words he contends against the present temptation and dolorous state of God's people, and against the insolent pride of such as oppressed them; as if the prophet should say, O ye troublers of God's people! howsoever it appears to you in this your bloody rage, that God regards not your cruelty, nor considers what violence you do to His poor afflicted, yet shall you be visited, yea, your carcasses shall fall and lie as stinking carrion upon the face of the earth, you shall fall without hope of life, or of a blessed resurrection; yea, howsoever you gather your substance and augment your families, you shall be so scattered that you shall leave no memorial of you to the posterities to come, but that which shall be execrable and odious.

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* Opposing.

† Combined.

‡ Covered over, weighed down.

Hereof the tyrants have their admonition, and the afflicted Church inestimable comfort: the tyrants that oppress shall receive the same end which they did who have passed before: that is, they shall die and fall with shame, without hope of resurrection, as is aforesaid. Not that they shall not arise to their own confusion and just condemnation; but that they shall not recover power to trouble the servants of God; neither yet shall the wicked arise, as David saith, in the counsel of the just. Now the wicked have their counsels, their thrones, and finally handle* (for the most part) all things that are upon the face of the earth; but the poor servants of God are reputed unworthy of men's presence, envied and mocked; yea, they are more vile before these proud tyrants than is the very dirt and mire which is trodden under foot. But in that glorious resurrection this state shall be changed; for then shall such as now, by their abominable living and cruelty, destroy the earth and molest God's children, see Him whom they have pierced; they shall see the glory of such as now they persecute, to their terror and everlasting confusion. The remembrance hereof ought to make us patient in the days of affliction, and so to comfort us that when we see tyrants in their blind rage tread under foot the saints of God, we despair not utterly, as if there were neither wisdom, justice, nor power above in the heavens to repress such tyrants, and to redress the dolors of the unjustly afflicted. No, brethren, let us be assured that the right hand of the Lord will change the state of things that are most desperate. In our God there is wisdom and power, in a moment to change the joy and mirth of our enemies into everlasting mourning, and our sorrows into joy and gladness that shall have no end.

Therefore, in these apparent calamities (and marvel not that I say *apparent* calamities, for he that sees not a fire is begun, that shall burn more than we look for, unless God of His mercy quench it,* is more than blind), let us not be discouraged, but with unfeigned repentance let us return to the Lord our God; let us accuse and condemn our former negligence, and steadfastly depend upon his promised deliverance; so shall our temporal sorrows be converted into everlasting joy. The doubt that might be moved concerning the destruction of those whom God exalteth, shall be discussed, if time will suffer, after we have passed throughout the text. The prophet now proceeds and saith, "Thou hast increased the nations, O Lord, Thou hast increased the nations; Thou art made glorious, Thou hast enlarged all the coasts of the earth. Lord, in trouble," etc.

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* Manage.

In these words the prophet gives consolation to the afflicted, assuring them that how horrible soever the desolation should be, yet should the seed of Abraham be so multiplied, that it should replenish the coasts of the earth; yea, that God should be more glorified in their affliction than He was during the time of their prosperity. This promise, no doubt, was incredible when it was made; for who could have been persuaded that the destruction of Jerusalem should have been the means whereby the nation of the Jews should have been increased? seeing that much rather it appeared, that the overthrow of Jerusalem should have been the very abolishing of the seed of Abraham: but we must consider, to what end it was that God revealed Himself to Abraham, and what is contained in the promise of the multiplication of his seed, and the benediction promised thereto.

[Instances are here adduced in which God has "notified His name" in the history of the Jews.]

Wherefore, dear brethren, we have no small consolation, if the state of all things be rightly considered. We see in what fury and rage the world, for the most part, is now raised, against the poor Church of Jesus Christ, unto which He has proclaimed liberty, after the fearful bondage of that spiritual Babylon, in which we have been holden captives longer space than Israel was prisoner in Babylon itself: for if we shall consider, upon the one part, the multitude of those that live wholly without Christ; and, upon the other part, the blind rage of the pestilent papists; what shall we think of the small number of them that profess Christ Jesus, but that they are as a poor sheep, already seized in the claws of the lion; yea, that they, and the true religion which they profess, shall in a moment be utterly consumed?

But against this fearful temptation, let us be armed with the promise of God, namely, that He will be the protector of His Church; yea, that He will multiply it, even when to man's judgment it appears utterly to be exterminated. This promise has our God performed, in the multiplication of Abraham's seed, in the preservation of it when Satan labored utterly to have destroyed it, and in deliverance of the same, as we have heard, from Babylon. He hath sent His Son Christ Jesus, clad in our flesh, who hath tasted of all our infirmities (sin excepted), who hath promised to be with us to the end of the world; He hath further kept promise in the publication, yea, in the restitution of His glorious Gospel. Shall we then think that He will leave His Church destitute in this most dangerous age? Only let us cleave to His truth, and study to conform our lives to the same, and He shall multiply His knowledge, and increase His people. But now let us hear what the prophet saith more:

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* Alluding to the political troubles of that day.

"Lord, in trouble have they visited Thee, they poured out a prayer when Thy chastening was upon them."

The prophet means that such as in the time of quietness did not rightly regard God nor His judgments, were compelled, by sharp corrections, to seek God; yea, by cries and dolorous complaints to visit Him. True it is, that such obedience deserves small praise before men; for who can praise, or accept that in good part, which comes as it were of mere compulsion? And yet it is rare that any of God's children do give unfeigned obedience, until the hand of God turn them. For if quietness and prosperity make them not utterly to forget their duty, both toward God and man, as David for a season, yet it makes them careless, insolent, and in many things unmindful of those things that God chiefly craves of them; which imperfections being espied, and the danger that thereof might ensue, our heavenly Father visits the sins of His children, but with the rod of His mercy, by which they are moved to return to their God, to accuse their former negligence, and to promise better obedience in all times hereafter; as David confessed, saying, "Before I fell in affliction I went astray, but now will I keep Thy statutes."

But yet, for the better understanding of the prophet's mind, we may consider how God doth visit man, and how man doth visit God; and what difference there is betwixt the visitation of God upon the reprobate, and His visitation upon the chosen.

God sometimes visits the reprobate in His hot displeasure, pouring upon them His plagues for their long rebellion; as we have heard before that He visited the proud, and destroyed their memory. At other times God is said to visit His people, being in affliction, to whom He sends comfort or promise of deliverance, as He visited the seed of Abraham, when oppressed in Egypt. And Zacharias said that "God had visited His people, and sent unto them hope of deliverance," when John the Baptist was born. But of none of these visitations our prophet here speaks, but of that only which we have already touched; namely, when God layeth His correction upon His own children, to call them from the venomous breasts of this corrupt world, that they suck not in over great abundance the poison thereof; and He doth, as it were, wean them from their mother's breasts, that they may learn to receive other nourishment. True it is, that this weaning (or speaning, as we term it) from worldly pleasure, is a thing strange to the flesh. And yet it is a thing so necessary to God's children, that, unless they are weaned from the pleasures of the world, they can never feed upon that delectable milk of God's eternal verity; for the corruption of the one either hinders the other from being received, or else so troubles the whole powers of man, that the soul can never so digest the truth of God as he ought to do.

Although this appears hard, yet it is most evident; for what can we receive from the world, but that which is in the world? What that is, the apostle John teaches; saying, "Whatsoever is in the world, is either the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, or the pride of life." Now, seeing that these are not of the Father, but of the world, how can it be, that our souls can feed upon chastity, temperance, and humility, so long as our stomachs are replenished with the corruption of these vices?

Now so it is, that flesh can never willingly refuse these forenamed, but rather still delights itself in every one of them; yea, in them all, as the examples are but too evident.

It behooves, therefore, that God Himself shall violently pull His children from these venomous breasts, that when they lack the liquor and poison of the world, they may visit Him, and learn to be nourished of Him. Oh if the eyes of worldly princes should be opened, that they might see with with what humor and liquor their souls are fed, while their whole delight consists in pride, ambition, and the lusts of the corrupt flesh! We understand then how God doth visit men, as well by His severe judgments as by His merciful visitation of deliverance from trouble, or by bringing trouble upon His chosen for their humiliation; and now it remains to understand how man visits God. Man doth visit God when he appears in His presence, be it for the hearing of His word, or for the participation of His sacraments; as the people of Israel, besides the observation of their sabbaths and daily oblations, were commanded thrice a year to present themselves before the presence of the tabernacle; and as we do, and as often as we present ourselves to the hearing of the word. For there is the footstool, yea, there is the face and throne of God Himself, wheresoever the Gospel of Jesus Christ is truly preached, and His sacraments rightly ministered.

But men may on this sort visit God hypocritically; for they may come for the fashion; they may hear with deaf ears; yea, they may understand, and yet never determine with themselves to obey that which God requires: and let such men be assured, that He who searches the secrets of hearts will be avenged of all such; for nothing can be more odious to God, than to mock Him in His own presence. Let every man therefore examine himself, with what mind, and what purpose, he comes to hear the word of God; yea, with what ear he hears it, and what testimony his heart gives unto Him, when God commands virtue, and forbids impiety.

Repinest thou when God requires obedience? Thou hearest to thine own condemnation. Mockest thou at God's threatenings? Thou shalt feel the weight and truth of them, albeit too late, when flesh and blood can not deliver thee from His hand! But the visitation, whereof our prophet speaks, is only proper to the sons of God, who, in the time when God takes from them the pleasures of the world, or shows His angry countenance unto them, have recourse unto Him, and confessing their former negligence, with troubled hearts, cry for His mercy. This visitation is not proper to all the afflicted, but appertains only to God's children: for the reprobates can never have access to God's mercy in time of their tribulation, and that because they abuse His long patience, as well as the manifold benefits they receive from His hands; for as the same prophet heretofore saith, "Let the wicked obtain mercy, yet shall he never learn wisdom, but in the land of righteousness;" that is, where the true knowledge of God abounds, "he will do wickedly." Which is a crime above all others abominable; for to what end is it that God erects His throne among us, but that we should fear Him? Why does He reveal His holy will unto us, but that we should obey it? Why does He deliver us from trouble, but that we should be witnesses unto the world, that He is gracious and merciful?

Now, when men, hearing their duty, and knowing what God requires of them, do malapertly fight against all equity and justice, what, I pray you, do they else but make manifest war against God? Yea, when they have received from God such deliverance, that they can not deny but that God Himself hath in His great mercy visited them, and yet they continue wicked as before; what deserve they but effectually to be given over unto a reprobate sense, that they may headlong run to ruin, both of body and soul? It is almost incredible that a man should be so enraged against God, that neither His plagues, nor yet His mercy showed, should move him to repent ance; but because the Scriptures bear witness of the one and the other, let us cease to marvel, and let us firmly believe, that such things as have been, are even at present before our eyes, albeit many, blinded by affection, can not see them.

[The case of Ahab is instanced as an illustration.]

"Like as a woman with child, that draweth near her travail, is in sorrow, and crieth in her pains, so have we been in Thy sight, O Lord; we have conceived, we have borne in vain, as though we should have brought forth the wind. Salvations were not made to the earth, neither did the inhabitants of the earth fall."

This is the second part of the prophet's complaint, in which he, in the person of God's people, complains, that of their great affliction there appeared no end. This same similitude is used by our Master Jesus Christ; for when He speaks of the troubles of His Church, He compares them to the pains of a woman travailing in child-birth. But it is to another end; for there He promises exceeding and permanent joy after a sort, though it appear trouble. But here is the trouble long and vehement, albeit the fruit of it was not suddenly espied. He speaks no doubt of that long and dolorous time of their captivity, in which they continually labored for deliverance, but obtained it not before the complete end of seventy years. During which time the earth, that is, the land of Judah, which sometimes was sanctified unto God, but was then given to be profaned by wicked people, got no help, nor perceived any deliverance: for the inhabitants of the world fell not; that is, the tyrants and oppressors of God's people were not taken away, but still remained and continued blasphemers of God, and troublers of His Church. But because I perceive the hours to pass more swiftly than they have seemed at other times, I must contract that which remains of this text into certain points.

The prophet first contends against the present despair; afterward he introduces God Himself calling upon His people; and, last of all, he assures His afflicted that God will come, and require account of all the blood-thirsty tyrants of the earth.

First, Fighting against the present despair, he saith, "Thy dead shall live, even my body (or with my body) shall they arise; awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs."

The prophet here pierces through all impediments that nature could object; and, by the victory of faith, he overcomes not only the common enemies, but the great and last enemy of all, death itself; for this would he say, Lord, I see nothing for Thy chosen, but misery to follow misery, and one affliction to succeed another; yea, in the end I see that death shall devour Thy dearest children. But yet, O Lord! I see Thy promise to be true, and Thy love to remain toward Thy chosen, even when death appears to have devoured them: "For Thy dead shall live; yea, not only shall they live, but my very dead carcase shall arise;" and so I see honor and glory to succeed this temporal shame; I see permanent joy to come after trouble, order to spring out of this terrible confusion; and, finally, I see that life shall devour death, so that death shall be destroyed, and so Thy servants shall have life. This, I say, is the victory of faith, when to the midst of death, through the light of God's word, the afflicted see life. Hypocrites, in the time of quietness and prosperity, can generally confess that God is true to His promises; but bring them to the extremity, and there the hypocrite ceases further to trust in God, than he seeth natural means, whereby God useth to work. But the true faithful, when all hope of natural means fail, flee to God Himself and to the truth of His promise, who is above nature; yea, whose works are not so subject to the ordinary course of nature, that when nature fails, His power and promise fail also therewith. [The text is here further explained.]

This vision, I say, given to the prophet, and by the prophet preached to the people, when they thought that God had utterly forgotten them, compelled them more diligently to advert to what the former prophets had spoken. It is no doubt but that they carried with them both the prophecy of Isaiah and Jeremiah, so that the prophet Ezekiel is a commentary to these words of Isaiah, where he saith, "Thy dead, O Lord, shall live, with my body they shall arise." The prophet brings in this similitude of the dew, to answer unto that part of their fidelity, who can believe no further of God's promises than they are able to apprehend by natural judgment; as if he would say, Think ye this impossible that God should give life unto you, and bring you to an estate of a commonwealth again, after that ye are dead, and, as it were, razed from the face of the earth? But why do you not consider what God worketh from year to year in the order of nature? Sometimes you see the face of the earth decked and beautified with herbs, flowers, grass, and fruits: again you see the same utterly taken away by storms and the vehemence of the winter: what does God to replenish the earth again, and to restore the beauty thereof? He sends down his small and soft dew, the drops whereof, in their descending, are neither great nor visible, and yet thereby are the pores and secret veins of the earth, which before, by vehemence of frost and cold were shut up, opened again, and so does the earth produce again the like herbs, flowers, and fruits. Shall you then think that the dew of God's heavenly grace will not be as effectual in you, to whom He hath made His promise, as it is in the herbs and fruits which, from year to year bud forth and decay? If you do so, the prophet would say your incredibility* is inexcusable; because you neither rightly weigh the power nor the promises of your God.

The like similitude the Apostle Paul uses against such as called the resurrection in doubt, because by natural judgment they could not apprehend that flesh once putrified, and dissolved as it were into other substances, should rise again, and return again to the same substance and nature: "O fool," saith he, "that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die; and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare corn, as it falleth, of wheat, or some other, but God giveth it a body as it pleaseth Him, even to every seed His own body." In which words and sentence the Apostle sharply rebukes the gross ignorance of the Corinthians, who began to call in doubt the chief article of our faith, the resurrection of the flesh after it was once dissolved, because that natural judgment, as he said, reclaimed thereto.† He reproves, I say, their gross ignorance, because they might have seen and considered some proof and document thereof in the very order of nature; for albeit the wheat or other corn, cast in the earth, appears to die or putrify, and so to be lost, yet we see that it is not perished, but that it fructifies according to God's will and ordinance.

Now, if the power of God be so manifest in raising up of the fruits of the earth, unto which no particular promise is made by God, what shall be His power and virtue in raising up our bodies, seeing that thereto He is bound by the solemn promise of Jesus Christ, His Eternal Wisdom, and the Verity itself that can not lie? Yea, seeing that the members must once communicate with the glory of the Head, how shall our bodies, which are flesh of His flesh, and bone of His bones, lie still forever in corruption, seeing that our Head, Jesus Christ, is now exalted in His glory? Neither yet is this power and good-will of God to be restrained unto the last and general resurrection only, but we ought to consider it in the marvelous preservation of His Church, and in the raising up of the same from the very bottom of death, when by tyrants it has been oppressed from age to age.

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* Unbelief.

† Cried out against it.

Now, of the former words of the prophet, we have to gather this comfort; that if at any time we see the face of the Church within this realm so defaced, as I think it shall be sooner than we look for —when we shall see, I say, virtue to be despised, vice to be maintained, the verity of God to be impugned, lies and men's inventions holden in authority—and finally, when we see the true religion of our God, and the zealous observers of the same, trodden under the feet of such as in their heart say, that "There is no God," let us then call to mind what have been the wondrous works of our God from the beginning—that it is His proper office to bring light out of darkness, order out of confusion, life out of death; and finally, that this is He that calleth things that are not even as if they were, as before we have heard. And if in the day of our temptation, which in my judgment approaches fast, we are thus armed, if our incredulity can not utterly be removed, yet shall it be so corrected, that damnable despair oppress us not. But now let us hear how the prophet proceeds:—

"Come, thou My people, enter within thy chamber, shut thy door after thee, hide thyself a very little while, until the indignation pass over."

Here the prophet brings in God amiably,* calling upon His people to come to Himself, and to rest with Him, until such time as the fury and sharp plagues should be executed upon the wicked and disobedient. It may appear at the first sight, that all these words of the prophet, in the person of God, calling the people unto rest, are spoken in vain; for we neither find chambers nor rest, more prepared for the dearest children of God, so far as man's judgment can discern, than for the rebellious and disobedient; for such as fell not by the edge of the sword, or died not of pestilence, or by hunger, were either carried captives unto Babylon, or else departed afterward into Egypt, so that none of Abraham's seed had either chamber or quiet place to remain in within the land of Canaan. For the resolution hereof, we must understand, That albeit the chambers whereunto God has called His chosen be not visible, yet notwithstanding they are certain, and offer unto God's children a quiet habitation in spirit, howsoever the flesh be travailed and tormented.

The chambers, then, are God's sure promises, unto which God's people are commanded to resort; yea, within which they are commanded to close themselves in the time of greatest adversity. The manner of speaking is borrowed from that judgment and foresight which God has printed in this our nature; for when men espy great tempests appearing to come, they will not willingly remain uncovered in the fields, but straightway they will draw them to their houses or holds, that they may escape the vehemence of the same; and if they fear any enemy pursues them, they will shut their doors, to the end that the enemy should not suddenly have entry.

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* Lovingly.

After this manner God speaks to His people; as if He should say, The tempest that shall come upon this whole nation shall be so terrible, that nothing but extermination shall appear to come upon the whole body. But thou My people, that hearest My word, believest the same, and tremblest at the threatenings of My prophets, now, when the world does insolently resist—let such, I say, enter within the secret chamber of My promises, let them contain themselves quietly there; yea, let them shut the door upon them, and suffer not infidelity, the mortal enemy of My truth and of My people that depend thereupon, to have free entry to trouble them, yea, further to murder, in My promise; and so shall they perceive that My indignation shall pass, and that such as depend upon Me shall be saved.

Thus we may perceive the meaning of the prophet; whereof we have first to observe that God acknowledges them for His people who are in the greatest affliction; yea, such as are reputed unworthy of men's presence are yet admitted within the secret chamber of God. Let no man think that flesh and blood can suddenly attain to that comfort; and therefore most expedient it is, that we be frequently exercised in meditation of the same. Easy it is, I grant, in time of prosperity, to say and to think that God is our God, and that we are His people; but when He has given us over into the hands of our enemies, and turned, as it were, His back unto us, then, I say, still to reclaim Him to be our God, and to have this assurance, that that we are His people, proceeds wholly from the Holy Spirit of God, as it is the greatest victory of faith, which overcomes the world; for increase whereof we ought continually to pray.

This doctrine we shall not think strange, if we consider how suddenly our spirits are carried away from our God, and from believing His promise. So soon as any great temptation apprehends us, then we begin to doubt if ever we believed God's promises, if God will fulfill them to us, if we abide in His favor, if He regards and looks upon the violence and injury that is done unto us; and a multitude of such cogitations which before lurked quietly in our corrupted hearts, burst violently forth when we are oppressed with any desperate calamity. Against which this is the remedy—once to apprehend, and still to retain God to be our God, and firmly to believe, that we are His people whom He loves, and will defend, not only in affliction, but even in the midst of death itself.

Again, Let us observe, That the judgments of our God never were, nor yet shall be so vehement upon the face of the earth, but that there has been, and shall be, some secret habitation prepared in the sanctuary of God, for some of His chosen, where they shall be preserved until the indignation pass by; and that God prepares a time, that they may glorify Him again, before the face of the world, which once despised them. And this ought to be unto us no small comfort in these appearing dangers, namely, that we are surely persuaded, that how vehement soever the tempest shall be, it yet shall pass over, and some of us shall be preserved to glorify the name of our God, as is aforesaid.

Two vices lurk in this our nature: the one is, that we can not tremble at God's threatenings, before the plagues apprehend us, albeit we see cause most just why His fierce wrath should burn as a devouring fire; the other is, that when calamities before pronounced, fall upon us, then we begin to sink down in despair, so that we never look for any comfortable end of the same.

To correct this our mortal infirmity, in time of quietness we ought to consider what is the justice of our God, and how odious sin is; and, above all, how odious idolatry is in His presence, who has forbidden it, and who has so severely punished it in all ages from the beginning: and in the time of our affliction we ought to consider, what have been the wondrous works of our God, in the preservation of His Church when it hath been in uttermost extremity. For never shall we find the Church humbled under the hands of traitors, and cruelly tormented by them, but we shall find God's just vengeance full upon the cruel persecutors, and His merciful deliverance showed to the afflicted. And, in taking of this trial, we should not only call to mind the histories of ancient times, but also we should diligently mark what notable works God hath wrought, even in this our age, as well upon the one as upon the other. We ought not to think that our God bears less love to His Church this day, than what He has done from the beginning; for as our God in His own nature is immutable, so His love toward His elect remains always unchangeable. For as in Christ Jesus He hath chosen His Church, before the beginning of all ages; so by Him will He maintain and preserve the same unto the end. Yea, He will quiet the storms, and cause the earth to open her mouth, and receive the raging floods of violent waters, cast out by the dragon, to drown and carry away the woman, which is the spouse of Jesus Christ, unto whom God for His own name's sake will be the perpetual Protector.

This saw that notable servant of Jesus Christ, Athanasius, who being exiled from Alexandria by that blasphemous, apostate, Julian the emperor, said unto his flock, who bitterly wept for his envious banishment, "Weep not, but be of good comfort, for this little cloud will suddenly vanish." He called both the emperor himself and his cruel tyranny a little cloud; and albeit there was small appearance of any deliverance to the Church of God, or of any punishment to have apprehended the proud tyrants, when the man of God pronounced these words, yet shortly after God did give witness that those words did not proceed from flesh nor blood, but from God's very Spirit. For not long after, being in warfare, Julian received a deadly wound, whether by his own hand, or by one of his own soldiers, the writers clearly conclude not; but casting his own blood against the heaven, he said, "At last Thou hast overcome, thou Galilean:" so in despite he termed the Lord Jesus. And so perished that tyrant in his own iniquity; the storm ceased, and the Church of God received new comfort.

Such shall be the end of all cruel persecutors, their reign shall be short, their end miserable, and their name shall be left in execrations to God's people; and yet shall the Church of God remain to God's glory, after all storms. But now shortly, let us come to the last point:

"For behold," saith the prophet, "the Lord will come out of His place, to visit the iniquity of the inhabitants of the earth upon them; and the earth shall disclose her blood, and shall no more hide her slain." Because that the final end of the troubles of God's chosen shall not be, before the Lord Jesus shall return to restore all things to their full perfection.

The prophet brings forth the eternal God, as it were, from his own place and habitation, and therewith shows the cause of His coming to be, that He might take account of all such as have wrought wickedly; for that he means, where he saith, "He will visit the iniquity of the inhabitants of the earth upon them." And lest any should think the wrong doers are so many, that they can not be called to an account, he gives unto the earth as it were an office and charge, to bear witness against all those that have wrought wickedly, and chiefly against those that have shed innocent blood from the beginning; and saith, "That the earth shall disclose her blood, and shall no more hide her slain men."

If tyrants of the earth, and such as delight in the shedding of blood, should be persuaded that this sentence is true, they would not so furiously come to their own destruction; for what man can be so enraged that he would willingly do, even before the eyes of God, that which might provoke His Majesty to anger, yea, provoke Him to become his enemy forever, if he understood how fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God?

The cause, then, of this blind fury of the world is the ignorance of God, and that men think that God is but an idol; and that there is no knowledge above that beholds their tyranny; nor yet justice that will, nor power that can, repress their impiety. But the Spirit of truth witnesses the contrary, affirming, that as the eyes of the Lord are upon the just, and as His ears are ready to receive their sobbing and prayers, so is His visage angry against such as work iniquity; He hateth and holdeth in abomination every deceitful and blood-thirsty man, whereof He has given sufficient document from age to age, in preserving the one, or at least in avenging their cause, and in punishing the other.

Where it is said, "That the Lord will come from His place, and that He will visit the iniquity of the inhabitants of the earth upon them, and that the earth shall disclose her blood;" we have to consider, what most commonly has been, and what shall be, the condition of the Church of God, namely, that it is not only hated, mocked, and despised, but that it is exposed as a prey unto the fury of the wicked; so that the blood of the children of God is spilled like unto water upon the face of the earth.

The understanding whereof, albeit it is unpleasant to the flesh, yet to us it is most profitable, lest that we, seeing the cruel treatment of God's servants, begin to forsake the spouse of Jesus Christ, because she is not to dealt with in this unthankful world, as the just and upright dealings of God's children do deserve. But contrariwise, for mercy they receive cruelty, for doing good to many, of all the reprobate they receive evil; and this is decreed in God's eternal counsel, that the members may follow the trace of the Head; to the end that God in His just judgment should finally condemn the wicked. For how should He punish the inhabitants of the earth, if their iniquity deserved it not? How should the earth disclose our blood, if it should not be unjustly spilled? We must then commit ourselves into the hands of our God, and lay down our necks; yea, and patiently suffer our blood to be shed, that the righteous Judge may require account, as most assuredly He will, of all the blood that hath been shed, from the blood of Abel the just, till the day that the earth shall disclose the same. I say, every one that sheds, or consents to shed the blood of God's children, shall be guilty of the whole; so that all the blood of God's children shall cry vengeance, not only in general, but also in particular, upon every one that has shed the blood of any that unjustly suffered.

And if any think it strange that such as live this day can be guilty of the blood that was shed in the days of the Apostles, let them consider that the Verity itself pronounced, That all the blood that was shed from the days of Abel, unto the days of Zacharias, should come upon the unthankful generation that heard His doctrine and refused it.

The reason is evident; for as there are two heads and captains that rule over the whole world, namely, Jesus Christ, the Prince of justice and peace, and Satan, called the prince of the world; so there are but two armies that have continued battle from the beginning, and shall fight unto the end. The quarrel which the army of Jesus Christ sustains, and which the reprobate persecute, is the same, namely, The eternal truth of the eternal God, and the image of Jesus Christ printed in his elect—so that whosoever, in any age, persecutes any one member of Jesus Christ for his truth's sake, subscribes, as it were with his hand, to the persecution of all that have passed before him.

And this ought the tyrants of this age deeply to consider; for they shall be guilty, not only of the blood shed by themselves, but of all, as is said, that has been shed for the cause of Jesus Christ from the beginning of the world.

Let the faithful not be discouraged, although they be appointed as sheep to the slaughter-house; for He, for whose sake they suffer, shall not forget to avenge their cause. I am not ignorant that flesh and blood will think that kind of support too late; for we had rather be preserved still alive, than have our blood avenged after our death. And truly, if our felicity stood in this life, or if temporal death should bring unto us any damage, our desire in that behalf were not to be disallowed or condemned: but seeing that death is common to all, and that this temporal life is nothing but misery, and that death fully joins us with our God, and gives unto us the possession of our inheritance, why should we think it strange to leave this world, and go to our Head and sovereign Captain, Jesus Christ?

Lastly, We have to observe this manner of speaking, where the prophet saith that "the earth shall disclose her blood:" in which words the prophet would accuse the cruelty of those that dare so unmercifully and violently force, from the breasts of the earth, the dearest children of God, and cruelly cut their throats in her bosom, who is by God appointed the common mother of mankind, so that she unwillingly is compelled to open her mouth and receive their blood.

If such tyranny were used against any woman, as violently to pull her infant from her breasts, cut the throat of it in her own bosom, and compel her to receive the blood of her dear child in her own mouth, all nations would hold the act so abominable that the like had never been done in the course of nature. No less wickedness commit they that shed the blood of God's children upon the face of their common mother, the earth, as I said before. But be of good courage, O little and despised flock of Christ Jesus! for He that seeth your grief, hath power to revenge it; He will not suffer one tear of yours to fall, but it shall be kept and reserved in His bottle, till the fullness thereof be poured down from heaven, upon those that caused you to weep and mourn. This your merciful God, I say, will not suffer your blood forever to be covered with the earth; nay, the flaming fires that have licked up the blood of any of our brethren; the earth that has been defiled with it, I say, with the blood of God's children, (for otherwise, to shed the blood of the cruel bloodshedders, is to purge the land from blood, and as it were to sanctify it) the earth, I say, shall purge herself of it, and show it before the face of God. Yea, the beasts, fowls, and other creatures whatsoever, shall be compelled to render that which they have received, be it flesh, blood, or bones, that appertained to Thy children, O Lord! which altogether Thou shalt glorify, according to Thy promise, made to us in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Thy well-beloved Son; to whom, with Thee, and the Holy Ghost, be honor, praise, and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Let us now humble ourselves in the presence of our God, and from the bottom of our hearts let us desire Him to assist us with the power of His Holy Spirit; that albeit, for our former negligence, God gives us over into the hands of others than such as rule in His fear; that yet He let us not forget His mercy, and the glorious name that hath been proclaimed among us; but that we may look through the dolorous storm of His present displeasure, and see as well what punishment He has appointed for the cruel tyrants, as what reward He has laid in store for such as continue in His fear to the end. That it would further please Him to assist, that albeit we see His Church so diminished, that it appears to be brought, as it were, to utter extermination, we may be assured that in our God there is great power and will, to increase the number of His chosen, until they are enlarged to the uttermost parts of the earth. Give us, O Lord! hearts to visit Thee in time of affliction; and albeit we see no end of our dolors, yet our faith and hope may conduct us to the assured hope of that joyful resurrection, in which we shall possess the fruit of that for which we now labor. In the mean time, grant unto us, O Lord! to repose ourselves in the sanctuary of Thy promise, that in Thee we may find comfort, till this Thy great indignation, begun among us, may pass over, and Thou Thyself appear to the comfort of Thine afflicted, and to the terror of Thine and our enemies.

Let us pray with heart and mouth,

Almighty God, and merciful Father, etc. Lord, unto Thy hands I commend my spirit; for the terrible roaring of guns,* and the noise of armor, do so pierce my heart, that my soul thirsteth to depart.

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* The Castle of Edinburgh was shooting against the exiled for Christ Jesus' sake.

DISCOURSE FIFTY-SEVENTH.

RALPH ERSKINE.

THE name of ERSKINE is highly distinguished among the Scottish divines; there having been three prominent clergymen bearing this cognomen. Ralph, the brother of Ebenezer, the most eloquent preacher of the three, was born at the village of Monilaws, in Northumberland county, March 15, 1685. He entered the University of Edinburg in 1699, and commenced the study of divinity in 1704. Five years later he was licensed to preach, and in 1711 ordained to the charge of Dunfermline. In the unhappy secession as to the "Marrow Controversy," and other matters of difference of opinion, Erskine went out of the established church, with his brother Ebenezer and others, and in 1740, for so doing, was formally cut off from that body. He nevertheless continued his useful ministry; and died on the 6th of November, 1752, his last words being, "Victory, victory, victory!"

Mr. Erskine was eminent as a preacher, possessing, beside his mental accomplishments, "a pleasant voice, an agreeable manner, and a warm, pathetic address." In literary attainments he was far superior to most of the Scottish clergy of his day. His numerous and diversified publications show him to have possessed acuteness of thought, energy of expression, and a rich, glowing fancy. His "Gospel Sonnets" are well known. Several editions of his Sermons have appeared. His best discourses are those preached on sacramental occasions. That here given is the main part of one of *six* sermons on the same text, with a great number of *heads*, *doctrines*, *uses*, *applications*, and *exhortations*. It is in the author's best style, and bears date of June, 1725. He is *here* showing the *qualities* of the act described.

THE GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE TO SHILOH.

"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be."—GEN. xlix. 10.

In this gathering unto Shiloh, the soul acts believingly; and all the other qualities of this gathering are reducible to this, and are so many ways, wherein faith acts, in coming and gathering to Christ; or how, being acted they act: and here is matter for trial; particularly then,

1. In this active gathering unto Shiloh, people are made to act *spiritually*, for it is a spiritual gathering, under the conduct of the Spirit of God, as a spirit of faith, making the soul to gather under the wings of Christ the Messias. It is not by natural might, but by the power of the Divine Spirit, that sinners gather to a Saviour: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord;" "even the exceeding greatness of His Almighty power." There is a spiritual internal principle, from which the man acts, in his gathering to Shiloh, even the Spirit of God as the main, and the new heart as the subordinate principle of faith in the man. It is not the Spirit's working extrinsically upon the man; hypocrites may have the Spirit working on them extrinsically, to the production of great affections and enlargement, while they are not savingly gathered: but this spiritual act is from a spiritual principle, whereof the Spirit of God within is the spring. The former is but a natural acting by some external objects, it is like a pool fed by water from the clouds; the other is like a well fed by a spring within.

Quest. How shall I know the difference betwixt these two, viz., the Spirit's working on me by His common motions, and His working in me as a living principle? Why, the common motions of the Spirit, externally moving the affections, differ from the saving operations of the Spirit internally elevating the soul to a God in Christ, as a land-flood differs from a living spring; the land-flood is maintained externally by the clouds, the living fountain is maintained internally by its own spring: thus the hypocrite's frames and affections are maintained only by external means and objects, such as the tuneable voice of the minister; so Ezekiel was to his hearers as "a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument," and when the external object or excitement is over, then their frame and affection falls, because the only thing that maintained it is gone: whereas, in the spiritual acting of the soul that is gathering to Shiloh, though faith comes by hearing externally, yet the Spirit of God being received by the hearing of faith, this internal principle of spiritual life does many times animate the soul to spiritual work, when all external objects and operations fail; and this may be known, just as a spring-well is known by the bubbling up of the water. Thus is the Spirit's inhabitation known by the actings of the graces of the Spirit, such as faith, love, repentance, joy in the Lord, and the like.

2. In gathering to Shiloh people are made to act *knowingly* and *judicially*, under the influences of the Spirit, as a spirit of light; and to act as in a matter of the greatest concern, with judgment and understanding, saying, as John, "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. We believe and are sure that Thou art Christ the Son of the living God." Many gather together in a confused way, and know not wherefore they meet together; but this gathering includes knowledge, and saving spiritual illumination: "They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee." They that know Him will gather to Him; there must be a seeing of the Son, before there can be a believing in Him, or gathering to Him. Many, instead of gathering to Christ, they gather to an idol of their own fancy; when they hear of Christ, their idolatrous carnal mind represents a carnal image of Christ in their own brain: As those that are said to have made idols according to their own understanding, so many in their own imagination form an idea of Christ; and this idea or image of Christ, that they have in their own mind, is all that they have for Christ. But, O sirs, when Christ is externally revealed in the Gospel, there must be a marvelous light discovering Him in Himself, making Him known, though not perfectly, yet really and truly as He is; not only as He is man, but as God-man, having all the fullness of the Godhead in Him, and all the glory of God appearing in His face, so as the soul can not but cleave and adhere to Him. A painted sun will neither give light nor heat, but the real sun gives both: so a painted image and representation of Christ in the imagination gives no spiritual light, heat, nor communicates any transforming virtue; but the true Son of Righteousness ariseth with healing under His wings. It is true, this light is not without mists and smoke, sent forth from the bottomless pit, to darken all; but yet there is such a clear discovery of the man's inability, of God's gracious offer, and Christ's good will and mind to the bargain, as determines the soul to its Deity. * * * *

3. In gathering to Shiloh, the people that are brought to Him are made to act *evangelically* or to believe, in a Gospel manner, to receive and rest upon Him, as He is offered to us in the Gospel. There is a Gospel-ground on which the people do gather: legal faith acts upon a legal ground, such as inherent strength and natural righteousness; but true faith acts upon the ground of a borrowed strength, and an imputed righteousness of another, saying, "Surely in the Lord only have I righteousness and strength." This gathering to Shiloh is a self-renouncing business, stripping the man of his own righteousness, of his own strength, taking him entirely off his

own bottom; they that are gathered to Christ, are gathered out of themselves. There is a Gospel-rule also, whereby they gather, in a suitableness to the Gospel-offer and dispensation. "So we preach, and so ye believed." Faith answers the Gospel-call, as the impress upon the wax does answer the engravings of the seal; so Christ offers Himself, and so sinners gather to Him, and believe in Him for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Hence again, there is a Gospel-order, wherein the gathering of the people is to Him; the soul, in coming to Him, receives first the person, and then the portion; even as God gives Christ, and then with Him all things. The people gather to Him, in a day of Power, *first*, as a Jesus, and *then*, as a Lord; *first*, for justification, and *then*, for sanctification. Legal adventures invert this Gospel-order, seeking sanctification first, that upon that bottom it may build its justification; seeking righteousness, "as it were, by the works of the law." And however confused and indistinct the true believer's faith may be, in his first believing, yet repeated acts of faith may afterward make it more and more evident to him that right believing is in the foresaid Gospel-order. There is a Gospel warrant, upon which this gathering proceeds: They that gather to Shiloh act warrantably, upon the warrant of an objective sufficiency; there is a sufficient Christ presented: O, the sufficiency of His person, being God-man in one person; the sufficiency of His offices and commission, being sealed of God to be a surety, a Saviour, a prophet, priest, and king; the sufficiency of His righteousness, His doing and dying, His obedience and satisfaction; the sufficiency of His power, as being able to save to the uttermost; the sufficiency of His will, while He proclaims His good will toward men; and that God is in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself! They gather, upon the warrant of a general Gospel-dispensation of grace through Christ, in the external revelation of the word, where the elect are not characterized more than others, but life and salvation through Christ held out to sinners of mankind, without distinction of nation, state, or condition; and so in an indefinite way. Thus run all the promises, except these that are made to believers, or such as have grace already; to them indeed the promises are definite, so also they are definite to the elect, in the decree of heaven; but in the external dispensation of the Gospel, they are indefinite and general, saying, To you belong the Covenants and the promise; and as the promise is indefinite, so the call is universal, whether by exhortations, invitation, entreaties, counsels, or commands, to all and every one, to come and receive Christ, and all His sure mercies, freely, and upon these Gospel-warrants do the people gather to Shiloh. In a word, the whole Covenant, and all the promises of it, are held forth to all the people, that they may gather to it; "I'll give thee for a Covenant of the people." Hence we are said, "to receive the promise through faith, to be persuaded of them; and embrace them," and the faith we are called to, is said to be a "receiving of the word," a "taking hold of His Covenant," a "believing of the testimony." Christ can not be received, but as He is offered; He is not offered to us, but in a word, a promise, a testimony: hence the substantial act of faith being an assent, there must be a word, promise, or testimony, for faith's immediate object, wherein we see and receive Christ. If a man would see his shadow in a glass, he first looks to the glass, and through it sees his own shadow or image; the glass is the immediate object to which his sight is directed; so, in order to our seeing of Christ, the glass of the Gospel-promise is set before us. Thus a displayed Covenant of grace, as standing fast in Christ, seems to be the warrant for the gathering of the people to Shiloh. "Come and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual Covenant (says our reading) that shall not be forgotten:" I know this is viewed, by some, in another sense, with reference to our covenanting; but I think the original reading that others notice is very pleasant and evangelical, for it may be read, "Come and let us join ourselves to the Lord, the perpetual Covenant shall not be forgotten," *q. d.*, Come and let us gather together unto Shiloh; why, the everlasting Covenant, that stands fast in him, who is the All of the Covenant, shall never be forgotten: and so it may be viewed, as an encouragement of faith, and reason for the gathering of the people to Him; behold He is given for a Covenant of the people, and this perpetual Covenant shall not be forgotten. Thus they are made to act evangelically.

4. In gathering to Shiloh, the people that are brought to Him are made to act *cordially* and spontaneously, with heart and will; yea, with a thousand good wills; "O take my heart," says the man, in the day of power, "take it, and a thousand blessings with it." It is true, there is no gathering, no approaching to Him, without a draught of Omnipotency; yet there is no violence in it, no force or compulsion, but when power comes, it takes away the backwardness and unwillingness. "Thy people shall be willing." Never did a mariner draw near to a shore with better will, after shipwreck, than the soul comes to Christ, in the day of power; the person being drawn, yields necessarily and willingly both: Draw me, we will run after Thee; *Draw me*, there is the Almighty power ex-

erted, in its irresistible operation; *we will run*, there is the voluntary motion of the soul: so that this gathering does not destroy, but establish the liberty of the will of the rational agent. Reason is not hoodwinked, the person approaches to a God in Christ, upon the most rational grounds, seeing and apprehending His misery while far from God, and the happiness of nearness to Him in Christ. And this gathering is as cordial as it is voluntary; as the will is inclined, so the heart is inflamed. Hypocrites may gather to ordinances, and gather to a communion-table with the outward man; they may draw near to God with the mouth, and honor Him with the lip, while the heart is far removed from Him. This is what God complains of, "Their heart is far from Me:" But what do I regard a gathering of dead corpses about My table and ordinances, a gathering of bodies, while there is no gathering of hearts? But in this gracious gathering, the language of the soul is, O, many a time I have given my heart away to the devil; I gave my heart and affections away to lusts; I gave my heart away to the world; and now, shall I give Christ less than I gave them? It will be a miracle if He accept of it, after my manifold departures; but O, if I had as many souls as I had sins, I would give them to Him! O, if I could believe in Him with the whole heart, pray to Him with the whole heart, serve Him with the whole heart; and that all my affections, that have been struggling among the creatures, may be gathered to Him, and centered in Him! Yea, in the day of power, a man finds himself so willingly and freely to come to Christ, that he is rolled upon Him, as if He were carried on a wave of the sea, or rather in a chariot paved with love: formerly he found believing hard, yea, that it was impossible for him to come to Christ; but now he finds it impossible for him to stay away from Christ: believing is so sweet and easy then, that, as if he had wings, he flees for refuge to the hope set before him. Though, as a great divine (viz., Dr. Owen) expresses it, faith is in the understanding, in respect of its being and subsistence; yet it is in the will and heart, in respect of its effectual working: as to its essence, it lies in assent, but the saving quality of this assent is, that it is cordial; and it is not true faith, if it be not a cordial assent to God's testimony concerning Christ. And indeed there is a great difference betwixt a dead assent, and a cordial hearty assent to any truth: suppose (says one) you were in a foreign land, and that you got a sure account that the Turks have got a victory over the Persians; and at the same time you hear that your beloved spouse is recovered of a dangerous disease, that all your family is well, and your affairs prosper · there is a great difference betwixt the way of assenting to these two; you believe the former, but it hath no impression on your heart, it is only a naked, heartless, unconcerned assent; but you would believe the other cordially and gladly, because you are much concerned therein: hence you would welcome the messenger. Thus the Gospel is not only a faithful saying, but worthy of all acceptation; and in gathering to Christ, in the day of power, the soul acts cordially.

5. In this gathering of the people to Shiloh, they are made to act *humbly* and *reverentially;* the man comes with a "What am I, and what is my father's house?" Behold I am vile, and if the Lord shall have mercy on me, it is well, grace shall have the glory; but if not, I may even preach His righteousness in hell, and declare He never wronged me, He is a just God. O the soul acts humbly in the day of powerful gathering, "That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth, because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done." O but a soul convinced of its own unworthiness and desert of hell, and that scarce can expect any thing but utter damnation, how does the first dawning of mercy melt and humble it! O whence is this to such a worm as I! He stands behind Christ weeping, and washing His feet with tears. When one of the first works of the Spirit in conversion, is to give the soul a light in its hand, to go down to the dark cellars of his heart and make discoveries, so as he stands amazed, trembling at the sight of himself, and the next work of the Spirit is to lead him to the lightsome chamber of the King of glory, to bring him from darkness to light, O how is he melted with a sense of mercy, and humbled with a sense of his own monstrous vileness! "Now mine eyes see Thee, wherefore I abhor myself." O in such a day, the man sees his heart vile, his lips vile, his practice vile, his righteousness vile and filthy rags; he sees in his bosom, as it were, an hell of devils and unclean spirits, that when he thinks on himself it makes him loathe and scunner, as it were, like a man ready to bock or vomit when he sees some filthy thing, especially among his meat; or as a man's flesh will creep when he sees some filthy venomous toad or viper; so it is with these that see themselves in the Lord's light, in the day of their gathering to Shiloh. They that were never humbled, were never gathered, and they that have been deeply humbled, have come to God with ropes about their necks, as worthy to be cast over the gibbet, and hanged over the fire of God's everlasting vengeance; they have been humbled to the dust, yea, humbled to nothing before the Lord, and to a thousand times less and worse than nothing; yea, they can not see such vile monsters among all the

devils in hell as themselves; they come, therefore, with humility, reverence, and godly fear.

6. In this gathering of the people to Shiloh, under the influence of gathering power and grace, they are made to act *boldly*, though humbly, "Let us come boldly to the throne of grace." "We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." "In whom we have boldness, and access with confidence, by the faith of Him." Here is the boldness of Faith in opposition to the boldness of presumption. Bold faith comes walking on a sea of blood, or rather upon the red and white pavement of the active and passive obedience of Christ. This boldness of faith's approach to a God in Christ is remarkable for several things:—it is remarkable for the vehemency that is sometimes in it; O how vehemently does the soul act when it is laying siege to heaven, by the prayer of faith and importunate supplication, crying, "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief;" Lord, increase my faith; Lord, give a drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem! O for a drop of the precious blood of the Lamb! O man, woman, where are the bedsides and secret corners that can bear witness to your besieging heaven with your vehement cries? It is remarkable for the *violence* that is in it; "The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force." The man acts as it were violently; "If I perish, I perish," at Christ I must be. It acts in a manner willfully; "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him; I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." The soul, as it were, violently casts itself upon the free grace and faithfulness of God, in the greatest distress; and here it lies, as it were, at anchor in such stormy days. It is remarkable for the *confidence* that is in it: it hath the confidence to give God a testimonial, as it were; when faith is acted, not only does God give the man a testimonial, "Enoch had this testimony, that he pleased God; but without Faith it is impossible to please Him;" but what is yet more strange, faith not only gets a testimonial from God, but gives a testimonial to Him, "He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true." Here is the confidence and assurance of faith; it acts upon an infallible testimony of the Divine veracity and faithfulness; a "Thus saith the Lord," is the firm foundation upon which faith is built. It is a receiving the record of God; and all acts of faith without this, are but as so many arrows shot at random in the open air. Many a confident address does faith make; it ventures to go as far ben, as "the Holy of holies, by the blood of Jesus;" it ventures the soul upon the blood of the Son of God, and upon the promise of a God in Christ: here is the boldness of faith. To gather

in to Shiloh and believe in Him, is in effect to say, I adventure my soul upon nothing in the world, but upon the promise of a God that I have provoked, and been an enemy to all my days; I have nothing but the word of this God, and yet I must adventure upon it even my everlasting ALL. It is an adventuring act, like Peter upon the boisterous water, with this in his mouth and heart, "Master, save me." To venture upon the promise of a provoked God, and to believe Him to be a God in Christ reconciled according to His word, upon account of the ransom He hath found out, and the propitiation He hath set forth: here is the boldness of faith. And again, it is remarkable for its *resoluteness;* the person, like the woman with the bloody issue, presses resolutely through crowds of devils and lusts, and with an irresistible intenseness of soul, forces a passage through all obstructions, to get a touch of the scepter of King Jesus. We are called to "come with full assurance of faith," with a holy resolution and courage. When a poor trembling Roman approached the Emperor Augustus, he was in some fear: "What," says the Emperor, "take you me for an elephant that will tear you?" So we should come with boldness to Christ. He encourages the worst of sinners; He hath given His word for it, which is firm as the pillars of heaven and earth, and stable like mountains of brass, that "him that cometh He will in no wise cast out." When he comes at first He will not cast him out; when he comes again afterward, He will not cast him out; he will not cast out the vilest and most desperate sinner that comes; He will not cast him out of His favor now, He will not cast him out of heaven at last; no, no, "He will in nowise cast him out." We may gather to Shiloh, and come with the greatest boldness; and welcome, welcome, welcome shall we be forever. In a word, this boldness is remarkable for the *solemnity* that is in it; it is a solemn gathering: the people that gather to Shiloh come to Him with a behold, "Behold, we come unto Thee; for Thou art the Lord our God." The heart goes out with some kind of eminency and solemnity: "Behold we come;" let heaven and earth be witnesses; we take instruments, as it were, in every angel's hand, in every creature's hand, in every spire of grass's hand, that we are come back to a God in Christ; we are satisfied the whole universe attest, and behold what we are going to do; not that the believer loves to blaze abroad his religion indecently—no, it is especially a silent, secret, heart-gathering and soul-approach to Shiloh; but they are so far from being ashamed of the match, and so well pleased are they with it, that they are content it be registrate in heaven, and that the whole creation attest it; "Behold we come!" The man acts with a solemn boldness.

The qualities of this penitential approach you may see. And this penitential acting of faith runs through the whole of the believer's life in a universal tenderness of disposition and deportment, according to the measure of faith: and there are six tender things in it which the believer hath. 1. He hath a tender heart, called a broken and contrite heart, broken for sin and from sin; Josiah's heart was tender. 2. A tender conscience; some have a conscience seared as with a hot iron, and that is a silent conscience; but the penitent hath a smitten conscience, as David's heart smote him, when he cut off the loop of Saul's garment. 3. A tender eye: "They shall look on Him whom they have pierced, and mourn;" rivers of tears run down their eyes, because of their own sins, and the sins of others, who break God's law. 4. A tender ear, which being circumcised, does hear and fear: "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite heat, and trembles at My word." 5. A tender lip or tongue, that dare not lie, nor speak profanely: "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue." And 6, A tender hand, that dares not touch the garments spotted with the flesh, but studies to shun all appearances of evil; or, if you will, you may add, lastly, that he hath a tender foot, saying with Hezekiah, "I will go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul." And this leads to another quality of this regular approach. 2dly. When there is a gathering to Shiloh, the regular approach and address to Him is made obedientially, as well as penitentially; it is an obediential gathering: and as faith acts penitentially, so it acts obedientially; for "it works by love," "It purifies the heart;" "and the man that hath it purifies himself, even as God is pure." It stirs up to new obedience; for "faith without works is dead." Wherever it is, it is still working, and it can no more be idle than the fire can be. It is true "we are justified by faith without works," as the Apostle says, that is without the causality of works, without the conditionality of works, without the instrumentality of works, and without the influence of works upon our justification; but not without the presence of works; for justifying faith is a sanctifying thing, and natively works, as the fire natively burns: Common faith is a dead useless faith, making no change or alteration on the soul where it is; but saving faith acts always obedientially; hence you read of "the obedience of faith, importing both that faith acts in obedience to the Divine call at first, and that it influences the soul to all the acts of Gospel obedience afterward. O, says the returning sinner, that is making this obediential address to a God in Christ, I have been a fugitive servant to the most glorious Lord and Master; I have deserted His service, and denied my obedience; but now, Lord, nail my ear to Thy door-post, that I may serve Thee forever; nail my heart to Thy service, that no trouble, temptation, devil or desertion may drive me away from Thee; nail my eyes to Thy service, that I may never look upon vanity; nail my hands to Thy service that I may never do an ill turn; nail my feet to Thy way, that I may never turn aside from Thee: let all the faculties of my soul be nailed to Thy service and obedience. 3dly. When there is a gathering to Shiloh, the regular address to Him is made speedily; O the poor soul, that sees itself ready to drop into hell, how speedily, in the day of power, does it flee unto Christ! "I flee to Thee to hide me," says the Psalmist. The flight of faith is very quick, quick and swift as lightning, that goes from the one end of heaven to the other in an instant; so when the soul is on the wing, under the influence of the spirit of faith, it can flee from earth to heaven in a moment. But this speedy gathering, I understand especially in opposition to delays, which are dangerous in religon: to delay coming to Christ for one half hour, is dangerous exceedingly; for, if you die within that half hour, you are undone to eternity. Now, in a day of powerful gathering, the soul makes no longer delay, but is in a holy haste, "I made haste, and delayed not to keep Thy righteous judgments." The man is made to fly with speed, and to run with haste out of Sodom. 4thly. When there is a gathering to Shiloh, the regular approach and address to him is made deliberately; though it is with speed, yet it is with deliberation. Though none can believe too soon by a saving faith, yet some believe too soon by a temporary faith, never having weighed matters in the balance of the sanctuary. The true approacher puts the matter in a fair balance; he puts the disadvantages in one scale, saying, What will be my fare if I come not to Christ? Why, "They that are far from Him shall perish." He puts the advantages in another scale, and comes at length to that conclusion. "It is good for me to draw near to God." O, of all the gatherings, the gathering to Shiloh is best; "To whom shall I go? He hath the words of eternal life." The man is not affected only with a transient flash; no, he sees the wicked oft in prosperity, and the godly in adversity; he sees the large and alluring offers that sin, Satan and the world make; and yet after all, he deliberately affirms, It is good for me to draw near to God and Christ: let others say, "Who will show us any good?" but my say shall be, "Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance on me. 5thly. When there is a gathering to Shiloh, the regular approach and address is made chastely and uprightly. The soul views the saying, that Christ came to save sinners from sin and wrath, not only as a faithful saying, but as worthy of all acceptation; because the beauty of Christ is discovered. Some have their reason conquered, but not their love; and therefore they come to Christ feignedly, and not with the whole heart; their judgment draws one way, and their affections another; for their judgment is gained, but not their affections: as if one should marry a woman, not because of her beauty, but because of her patrimony; not from love to her person, but love to her portion. Some take on with Christ, and take hold of the skirt of this Jew, who yet see "No form or comeliness in Him, for which He should be desired." But as it is said, "The upright love Thee;" so they that in gathering to Him act chastely and uprightly, they come to Him out of pure love, not for servile ends, not to gratify a natural conscience, not for fear of hell only, but from a great love to Him, and a just esteem of Him, and a strong desire of fellowship with Him. The man is content to come to Christ on Mount Calvary, as well as on Mount Tabor; when going to Golgotha in ignominy, as well as when riding to Jerusalem in triumph: he cleaves to Him, when people cry, "Away with Him, away with Him; crucify Him;" as well as when they cry, "Hosanna to the Son of David." He loves Him when lying in a grave, as well as when mounted on a throne. The chaste and upright comer cleaves to Him, when kings and princes are against Him, when laws and governments are against Him, when potentates and parliaments are against Him, as well as when they seem to be upon His side. It is too true indeed, that there are many unchaste thoughts, and looks, and lustings after idols in the hearts of true believers, and many defections and declinings may take place; but these are wrestled with and opposed by them, and that not only by their light and conscience, but by their love and affection to the Lord Jesus, saying, "O shall I thus requite the Lord?" So that in the main they are upright. But, to the same purpose, 6thly. When there is a gathering of the people to Shiloh, the right and regular approach and address to Him is made entirely and undividedly. False and hypocritical comers come with a divided heart to a divided Christ; but true comers, with a whole heart to a whole Christ. The legalist would marry Christ, while yet his other husband the law is not dead to him, nor he dead to it; but it is an adulterous and unlawful match, to join with another husband while the first is living. Hence true believers in Christ are said to be "Dead to the law by the body of Christ, that they might be married to another," etc. And God casts down the old building, turns him out of that shelter, lets him see all his legal duties, best performances, and most glaring graces, are but fig-leaves, insufficient to cover his nakedness; and discovers the necessity, excellency and glory of Christ's righteousness; and the man submits cordially to it, renouncing all hope and expectation of life, favor and justification by the deeds of the law. The carnal man would have Christ and his lusts too; "But if you seek Me," says Christ, "let these go their way." Gathering grace makes the man say, "What have I to do any more with idols?" The covetous man would have Christ and the world too; Christ satisfies his conscience, and he flees to Him for that; the world satisfies his heart, and he cleaves to it for that: but in the day of gathering power, the emptiness of the world is discovered, and the man sells all for the pearl of great price.

The man that comes to Christ, comes for all these four things, For *Wisdom*, *Righteousness*, *Sanctification*, and *Redemption*; he comes to Him as a *Prophet* for wisdom, as a *Priest* for righteousness, as a *King* for sanctification, and as his *All in all* for complete redemption: and he can want none of these, because he knows his own foolishness, guiltiness, filthiness, and misery. The true believer dares not divide righteousness from sanctification, nor pardon from purity; yea, he comes to Christ for remission of sin for the right end. What is that? Namely, that, being freed from the guilt of sin, he may be freed from the dominion of it. Knowing that there is forgiveness with Him that He may be feared, he does not believe remission of sin that he may indulge himself in the commission of it. No, no; the blood of Christ, that purges the conscience from the guilt of sin, does also purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God. They that come to Christ regularly then, come so to Him for righteousness, that they may have Him also for sanctification; otherwise the man does not really desire the favor and enjoyment of God, or to be in friendship with Him who is a holy God. As the true lover loves Him, not only because He is good and merciful, but because He is a pure and holy JESUS; so the true believer employs Christ for making him holy as well as happy; and hence draws virtue from Him for killing of sin, and quickening the soul in the way of duty: and indeed the faith that can never keep you from a sin, will never keep you out of hell; and the faith that can not carry you to a duty, will not carry you to heaven. Justifying faith is a sanctifying grace, it improves Christ undividedly. 'Tis true, as it sanctifies it does not justify; but that faith that justifies, does also sanctify: as the sun that enlightens hath heat with it, but it is not the heat of the sun that enlightens, but the light thereof; so that faith that justifies hath love and sanctity with it, but it is not the love and sanctity that justifies, but faith as closing with Christ. 7thly. When there is a gathering of the people to Shiloh, the regular approach and address to him is made *exclusively*, excluding all other saviours, all other helps, all other props, saying, "I will make mention of Thy righteousness, and of Thine only." To depend partly upon Christ, and partly upon our own righteousness, is to set one foot upon firm ground, and another upon quicksand. If a man set one foot upon a rock, and another upon the deep water, and lean to them both with equal weight, yea, if he give any of his weight to the foot that is on the water, he will be sure to sink into the deep: so here. Therefore, in the day of gathering to Christ, the soul is brought to say, "Surely in the Lord only have I righteousness and strength." Thus Paul excludes the best righteousness that ever he had, either before or after conversion, from the matter of his justification. When he compares his best righteousness with Christ's, he looks upon it as a dunghill, a stinking dunghill where there is no pleasure, and a sinking dunghill where there is no standing. Such is our righteousness, if it be not excluded from our justification before God, and acceptance with Him. If we go about to establish our own righteousness, it stinks in the Divine nostrils as dung: and not only so, but it is a sinking ground to stand upon, there's no firm footing; the more a man leans to it, the more he sinks in it. Christ's blood is the only sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savor to God; every sacrifice stinks, that is not perfumed therewith: Christ's righteousness is the only sure foundation and firm ground for standing upon before God. As the way of sin is a sinking way, so the way of self-righteousness is little better; for the sin that is in man's best righteousness trips up his heels, and lays him in the dirt, where he sinks to hell, if he be not brought to build upon a surer ground, and to take a better way. 8thly. When there is a gathering to Shiloh, the regular approach and address to him is made *progressively*, as also peremptorily and irreversibly, saying, "Henceforth we will not go back." O, after we have tasted the bitterness of sin, and the bitterness of wrath, after the wings of our souls have been singed with the flames of hell, after the arrows of conviction shot out of the bow of Omnipotence have pierced our souls, so as no man, minister or angel, could pull them out, Christ did it with His own hand, and therein manifested His powerful Grace, as being the man of God's right hand, shall we again turn our back upon Him? No, henceforth through grace we will not go back. The true believer comes to Christ, so as never to part with Him, saying, as Ruth to Naomi. "Entreat me not to leave Thee, or to return from following after Thee: for whither Thou goest, I will go; and where Thou lodgest, I will lodge: Thy people shall be my people, and Thy God my God. Nothing shall part Thee and me." Yea, the man, having once come to Christ, is aye coming nearer and nearer to Him. "To whom coming, as to a living stone, ye are built up a spiritual house;" the building goes up gradually, and is still going forward. Some professors are like the mill-wheel; it goes round, yet still it stands in the same place where it was: they go the round of duties, and morning and evening prayers, and attend Sabbath and week-day sermons, which is well done; but they are at a stand, they are the same now that they were ten, twenty years ago, if not worse. But, in gathering to Shiloh, the people are made to advance nearer and nearer to heaven, getting more knowledge, more experience, more hatred of sin, more love and likeness to Christ. It is true, the saints themselves have their winter-decays, but they have also their summer revivings that set them forward again. And thus "The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more to a perfect day.

DISCOURSE FIFTY-EIGHTH.

JOHN M'LAURIN.

M'Laurin was one of the brightest ornaments of the Christian churches of his time. He was born at Glenderule, in Argyleshire, where his father was minister, in the year 1693. His studies were pursued at Glasgow and Leyden. In 1717 he was licensed to preach, and in 1719 ordained minister of Luss, a county parish, situated on the banks of Loch Lomond, about twenty miles north of Glasgow. In 1723 he became minister in the city of Glasgow, where he died in September, 1754.

M'Laurin was a correspondent of President Edwards; and between these two eminent and devoted ministers there existed great mutual affection and Christian regard. It is not often that profound piety, unwearied activity, and the highest order of intellectual endowments have been more happily united than in M'Laurin. The fruits of his pen that remain are few, but of sterling value. They consist mainly in essays and sermons, and an octavo volume on the "Prophecies Concerning the Messiah," the republication of which in this country would be an acceptable service to many. The Presbyterian Board of Publication in Philadelphia have issued his sermons and essays in one 12mo volume. For impressive eloquence he has nothing else equal to the sermon here given. It is a masterpiece; and though the several parts do not possess the same degree of merit, any portion of it is too good to be omitted, so that we give it entire.

GLORYING IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."—Galatians, vi. 14.

It is an old and useful observation, that many of the most excellent objects in the world are objects whose excellency does not appear at first view; as, on the other hand, many things of little value appear more excellent at first, than a nearer view discovers them to be. There are some things we admire, because we do not know them; and the more we know them, the less we admire them: there are other things we despise through ignorance, because it requires pains and application to discover their beauty and excellency.

This holds true in nothing more than in that glorious, despised object mentioned in the text. There is nothing the world is more divided about in its opinion, than this. To the one part, it is altogether contemptible; to the other, it is altogether glorious. The one part of the world wonders what attractions others find in it; and the other part wonders how the rest of the world are so stupid as not to see them; and are amazed at the blindness of others, and their own former blindness.

It is said of the famous reformer Melancthon, when he first saw the glory of this object at his conversion, that he imagined that he could easily, by plain persuasion, convince others of it; that the matter being so plain, and the evidence so strong, he did not see how, on a fair representation, any could stand out against it. But, upon trial, he was forced to express himself with regret, "that old Adam was too strong for young Melancthon; and that human corruption was too strong for human persuasion, without Divine grace."

The true use we should make of this is, certainly, to apply for that enlightening grace to ourselves which the Apostle Paul prays for, in the behalf of the Ephesians: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ may give unto us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him." But, as here, and in other cases, prayer and means should be joined together, so one of the chief means of a right knowledge of the principal object of our faith, and ground of our hope, is to meditate on the glory of that object, asserted so strongly in this text; and that by one who formerly had as diminishing thoughts of it as any of its enemies can have.

In the verses preceding the text, the apostle tells the Galatians what some false teachers among them gloried in; here he tells what he himself gloried in. They gloried in the old ceremonies of the Jewish law, which were but shadows; he gloried in the cross of Christ, the substance. He knew it was an affront to the substance, to continue these shadows in their former force, after the substance itself appeared; therefore he rejects that practice with zeal, and, at the same time, confines his own glorying to that blessed object, which the shadows were designed to signify. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Here the apostle showeth us both his high esteem of the cross of Christ, and the powerful influence of it upon his mind. The cross of Christ signifies, in Scripture, sometimes our sufferings for Christ, sometimes His sufferings for us. As the latter is the chief and most natural sense of the words, so there is reason to think it is the sense of the apostle here. This is the sense of the same expression in the twelfth verse of this chapter, which speaks of persecution (that is, our suffering) for the cross of Christ, namely, the doctrine of Christ's cross. Besides, it is certain, that it is not our sufferings, but Christ's sufferings, which we are chiefly to glory in, to the exclusion of all other things; and it is not the former chiefly, but the latter, that mortifies our corruptions, and crucifies the world to us.

The cross of Christ may signify here, not only His death but the whole of His humiliation, or all the sufferings of His life and death; of which sufferings the cross was the consummation. The apostle, both here and elsewhere, mentions the cross, to remind us of the manner of His death, and to strengthen in our minds those impressions which the condescension of that death had made, or ought to have made, in them. That the Author of liberty should suffer the death of a slave; the Fountain of honor, the height of disgrace; and that the punishments which were wont to be inflicted upon the meanest persons for the highest offenses, should be inflicted on the greatest Person that could suffer; this is the object that the apostle gloried in.

There are not two things more opposite than glory and shame; here the apostle joins them together. The cross, in itself, is an object full of shame; in this case, it appeareth to the apostle full of glory. It had been less remarkable had he only said he gloried in his Redeemer's exaltation after He left the world, or in the glory He had with the Father before He came to it, yea, before the world was: but the object of the apostle's glorying is the Redeemer, not only considered in the highest state of honor and dignity, but even viewed in the lowest circumstances of disgrace and ignominy; not only as a powerful and exalted, but as a condemned and crucified Saviour.

Glorying signifies the highest degree of esteem: the cross of Christ was an object of which the apostle had the most exalted sentiments, and the most profound veneration; this veneration he took pleasure to avow before the world, and was ready to publish on all occasions. This object so occupied his heart and engrossed his affections, that it left no room for any thing else—he gloried in nothing else. And, as he telleth us in other places, he counted every thing else but loss and dung, and would know nothing else, and was determined about it.

The manner of expressing his esteem of this object has a remarkable force and vehemence in it: "God forbid!" or, Let it by no means happen. As if he had said, "God forbid, whatever others do, that ever it should be said that Paul, the old persecutor, should glory in any thing else but in the crucified Redeemer; who plucked him as a brand out of the fire, when he was running further and further into it; and who pursued him with mercy and kindness, when he was pursuing Him in His members with fierceness and cruelty. I did it through ignorance (and it is only through ignorance that any despise Him). He has now revealed Himself to me; and God forbid that the light that met me at Damascus should ever go out of my mind. It was a light full of glory; the object it discovered was all glorious—my all in all; and God forbid that I should glory in any thing else."

His esteem of that blessed object was great, and its influence on him was proportionable. By it the world was crucified to him and he was crucified to the world. Here is a mutual crucifixion. His esteem of Christ was the cause why the world despised him, and was despised by him. Not that the cross made him hate the men of the world, or refuse the lawful enjoyments of it; it allowed him the use of the latter, and obliged him to love the former. But it crucified those corruptions which are contrary both to the love of our neighbor and the true enjoyment of the creature. This is called fighting, warring, wrestling and killing. The reason is, because we should look upon sin as our greatest enemy; the greatest enemy of our souls, and of the Saviour of our souls. This was the view the apostle had of sin, and of the corruption of the world through lust. He looked upon it as the murderer of his Redeemer; and this inspired him with a just resentment against it. It filled him with those blessed passions against it, mentioned by himself, as the native fruits of faith and repentance; zeal, indignation, revenge; that is, such a detestation of sin, as was joined with the most careful watchfulness against it.

This is that crucifying of the world meant by the apostle. The reason of the expression is, because the inordinate love of worldly things is one of the chief sources of sin. The cross of Christ gave such a happy turn to the apostle's affections, that the world was no more the same thing to him that it was to others, and that it had been formerly to himself. His soul was sick of its pomp; and the things he was most fond of before, had now lost their relish with him. Its honors appeared now contemptible, its riches poor, its pleasures nauseous; its examples and favors did not allure, nor its hatred terrify him. He considered the love or hatred of men, not chiefly as it affected him, but themselves, by furthering or hindering the success of his doctrine among them. All these things may be included in that "crucifying of the world" mentioned in the last clause of the verse; but the intended ground of the discourse being the first clause, the doctrine to be insisted on is this:

"That the cross of Christ affords sinners matter of glorying above all other things: yea, that it is, in a manner, the only thing they should glory in. The whole humiliation of Christ, and particularly His death for the sake of sinners, is an object that has such incomparable glory in it, that it becomes us to have the most honorable and exalted thoughts of it." As this is evidently contained in the text, so it is frequently inculcated on us in other Scriptures. It is plain that when the Scriptures speak of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, it is meant chiefly of His glory in the face of Christ crucified; that is, in the work of redemption finished on the cross.

In discoursing on this subject, it will be proper, first, to consider briefly, What it is to glory in any object; and then, What ground of glorying we have in this blessed object proposed in the text.

To glory in any object includes these two things: first, *a high esteem of it;* and then, *some concern in it.* We do not glory in the things we are interested in unless we esteem them; nor in the things we admire and esteem, unless we are some way interested in them. But although all professing Christians are some way concerned to glory in the cross of Christ, because the blessed fruits of His cross are both plainly revealed, and freely offered to them; yet, it is those only who have sincerely embraced these offers, that can truly glory in that object. Yet, what is *their* privilege, is the duty of all. All should be exhorted to glory in this object, and to have a high esteem of it, because of its excellency in itself; to fix their hearts on it by faith, because it is offered to them; to show their esteem of it by seeking an interest in it; and, having a due esteem of it, and obtained an interest in it, to study a frame of habitual triumph in it. But the nature of this happy frame of mind is best understood by considering the glory of the object of it.

The ancient prophets who foretold Christ's coming, appear transported with the view of His glory. Not only the New Testament, but also the Old, represents the Messiah as the most remarkable and most honorable Person that ever appeared on the stage of the world. It speaks of Him as a glorious Governor, a Prince, a King, a Conqueror, besides other magnificent titles of the greatest dignity; showing that His government should be extensive and everlasting, and that His glory should fill the whole earth. But, while the prophets foretell His greatness, they foretell also His meanness. They show, indeed, He was to be a glorious King, but a King who would be rejected and despised of men; and that, after all the great expectation the world would have of Him, He was to pass over the stage of the world disregarded and unobserved, excepting as to the malicious treatment He was to meet with on it.

About the time of His coming, the Jews were big with hopes of Him, as the great Deliverer and chief ornament of their nation. And if history be credited, even the heathens had a notion about that time, which probably was derived from the Jewish prophecies, that there was a Prince of unparalleled glory to rise in the East, and even in Judea in particular, who was to found a kind of universal monarchy. But their vain hearts, like those of most men in all ages, were so intoxicated with the admiration of worldly pomp, that that was the only greatness they had any notion or relish of. This made them form a picture of Him who was the desire of all nations, very unlike the original.

A king whom the world admires, is one of extensive power, with numerous armies, a golden crown and scepter, a throne of state, magnificent palaces, sumptuous feasts, many attendants of high rank, immense treasures to enrich them with, and various posts of honor to prefer them to.

Here was the reverse of all this. For a crown of gold, a crown of thorns; for a scepter, a reed put in His hand in derision; for a throne, a cross. Instead of palaces, not a place to lay His head; instead of sumptuous feasts to others, ofttimes hungry and thirsty Himself; instead of great attendants, a company of poor fishermen; instead of treasures to give them, not money enough to pay tribute without working a miracle; and the preferment offered them, was to give each of them His cross to bear. In all things the reverse of worldly greatness, from first to last. A manger for a cradle at His birth; not a place to lay His head sometimes in His life; nor a grave of His own at His death.

Here unbelief frets and murmurs, and asks, Where is all the glory that is so much extolled? For discovering this, faith needs only look through that thin vail of flesh, and under that low disguise appears the Lord of glory, the King of kings, the Lord of hosts, strong and mighty. The Lord, mighty in battle; the heavens His throne; the earth His footstool; the light His garments, the clouds His chariots; the thunder His voice; His strength omnipotence; His riches all-sufficiency; His glory infinite; His retinue the hosts of heaven, and the excellent ones of the earth; on whom He bestows riches unsearchable, an inheritance incorruptible, banquets of everlasting joys, and preferments of immortal honor; making them kings and priests unto God; conquerors: yea, and more than conquerors—children of God, and mystically one with Himself.

Here appears something incomparably above all worldly glory, though under a mean disguise. But the objection is still against that disguise. Yet even that disguise, upon due consideration, will appear to be so glorious, that its very meanness is honorable. It was a glorious disguise, because the designs and effects of it are so. If He suffered shame, poverty, pain, sorrows, and death for a time, it was that we might not suffer these things forever. That meanness, therefore, was glorious, because it was subservient unto an infinitely glorious design of love and mercy.

It was subservient more ways than one. It satisfied the penalty of the law; it put unspeakable honor on the commandments of it. It was a part of Christ's design to make holiness (that is, obedience to the law) so honorable, that every thing else should be contemptible in comparison of it. Love of worldly greatness is one of the principle hinderances of it. We did not need the example of Christ to commend earthly grandeur to us; but very much to reconcile us to the contrary, and to make us esteem holiness, though accompanied with meanness. Christ's low state was an excellent means for that end. There was therefore greatness, even in His meanness. Other men are honorable by their station; but Christ's station was made honorable by Him; He has made poverty and meanness, joined with holiness, to be a state of dignity.

Thus Christ's outward meanness, that disguised His real greatness, was in itself glorious, because of the design of it. Yet that meanness did not wholly becloud it; many beams of glory shone through it.

His birth was mean on earth below; but it was celebrated with hallelujas by the heavenly host in the air above. He had a poor lodging, but a star lighted visitants to it from distant countries. Never prince had such visitants so conducted. He had not the magnificent equipage that other kings have; but He was attended with multitudes of patients, seeking and obtaining healing of soul and body. That was more true greatness than if He had been attended with crowds of princes. He made the dumb that attended Him sing His praises, and the lame to leap for joy; the deaf to hear His wonders, and the blind to see His glory. He had no guard of soldiers, nor magnificent retinue of servants: but, as the centurion, that had both, acknowledged, health and sickness, life and death, took orders from Him. Even the winds and storms, which no earthly power can control, obeyed Him; and death and the grave durst not refuse to deliver up their prey when He demanded it. He did not walk upon tapestry; but when He walked on the sea, the waters supported Him. All parts of the creation, excepting sinful men, honored Him as their Creator. He kept no treasure; but when He had occasion for money, the sea sent it to Him in the mouth of a fish. He had no barns nor corn-fields; but when He inclined to make a feast, a few small loaves covered a sufficient table for many thousands. None of all the monarchs of the world ever gave such entertainment. By these, and many such things, the Redeemer's glory shone through His meanness, in the several parts of His life. Nor was it wholly clouded at His death. He had not, indeed, that fantastic equipage of sorrow that other great persons have on such occasions; but the frame of nature solemnized the death of its Author; heaven and earth were mourners. The sun was clad in black; and if the inhabitants of the earth were unmoved, the earth itself trembled under the awful load. There were few to pay the Jewish compliment of rending their garments; but the rocks were not so insensible—they rent their bowels. He had not a grave of His own; but other men's graves opened to Him. Death and the grave might be proud of such a tenant in their territories; but He came not there as a subject, but as an Invader—a Conqueror. It was then that death, the king of terrors, lost his sting: and on the third day, the Prince of life triumphed over him, spoiling death and the grave. This last particular, however, belongs to Christ's exaltation: the other instances show a part of the glory of His humiliation, but it is a small part of it.

The glory of the cross of Christ which we are chiefly to esteem, is the glory of God's infinite perfections displayed in the work of redemption, as the Apostle expresses it, "The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;" even of "Christ crucified." It is this which makes any other object glorious, according as they manifest more or less of the perfections of God. This is what makes the work of creation so glorious. The heavens declare God's glory, and the firmament His handiwork; and we are inexcusable for not taking more pains to contemplate God's perfections in them—His almighty power and incomprehensible wisdom, and particularly His infinite goodness. But the effects of the Divine goodness in the works of creation are only temporal favors; the favors purchased to us by the cross of

Christ are eternal. Besides, although the works of creation plainly show that God is in Himself good; yet they also show that God is just, and that He is displeased with us for our sins; nor do they point out to us the way how we may be reconciled to Him. They publish the Creator's glory. They publish at the same time His laws, and our obligations to obey them. Our consciences tell us we have neglected these obligations, violated these laws, and consequently incurred the Lawgiver's displeasure. His works declaring His glory, show that in His favor is life, and consequently that in His displeasure is death and ruin. Yea, they lay us in some measure under His displeasure already. Why else do natural causes give so much trouble in life, and pain in death? From all quarters the works of God revenge the quarrel of His broken law. They give these frail bodies subsistence for a time, but it is a subsistence embittered with many vexations; and at last they crush them and dissolve them into dust.

The face of nature, then, is glorious in itself; but it is overcast with a gloom of terror to us. It shows the glory of the Judge to the criminal—the glory of the offended Sovereign to the guilty rebel. This is not the way to give comfort and relief to a criminal; it is not the way to make him glory and triumph. Accordingly the enemies of the cross of Christ, who refuse to know God otherwise than by the works of nature, are so far from glorying in the hopes of enjoying God in heaven, that they renounce all those great expectations, and generally deny that there is any such blessedness to be had. Conscience tells us we are rebels against God, and nature does not show how such rebels may recover His favor; how, in such a well-ordered government as the Divine government must be, the righteous Judge and Lawgiver may be glorified, and the criminal escape; much less how the Judge may be glorified, and the criminal obtain glory likewise.

The language of nature, though it be plain and loud in proclaiming the glory of the Creator, yet it is dark and intricate as to His inclination toward guilty creatures. It neither assures peremptorily that we are in a state of despair, nor gives sure footing for our hopes. If we are favorites, whence so many troubles? If we are hopeless criminals, whence so many favors? Nature shows God's glory, and our shame; His law our duty, and consequently our danger; but about the way to escape it is silent and dumb. It affords many motives for exciting desires after God, but it shows not the way to get these desires satisfied. Here, in the text is an object which gives us better intelligence. It directs us not merely to seek by feeling in the dark, if haply we may find, but to seek Him so as to certainly find Him. Unlikely doctrine to a carnal mind! that there should be more of God's glory manifested to us in the face of Christ crucified, than in the face of heaven and earth. The face of Christ! in which sense discovers nothing but marks of pain and disgrace; that mangled visage, red with gore, covered with marks of scorn, swelled with strokes, and pale with death: that would be the last object in which the carnal mind would seek to see the glory of the God of life; a visage clouded with the horror of death. It would with more pleasure and admiration view the same face when transfigured, and shining like the sun in its strength. Divine glory shone indeed then in a bright manner, in that face on the mount, but not so brightly as on Mount Calvary. This was the most glorious transfiguration of the two. Though all the light in the world, in the sun and stars, were collected together in one stupendous mass of light, it would be but darkness to the glory of this seemingly dark and melancholy object; for it is here, as the Apostle expresses it, we all, as with open face, may behold the glory of God.

Here shine spotless justice, incomprehensible wisdom, and infinite love, all at once. None of them darkens or eclipses the other; every one of them gives a luster to the rest. They mingle their beams and shine with united, eternal splendor; the just Judge, the merciful Father, and the wise Governor. No other object gives such a display of all these perfections; yea, all the objects we know give not such a display as any one of them. Nowhere does justice appear so awful, mercy so amiable, or wisdom so profound.

By the infinite dignity of Christ's person, His cross gives more honor and glory to the law and justice of God, than all the other sufferings that ever were or will be endured in the world. When the Apostle is speaking to the Romans of the Gospel, he does not tell them only of God's mercy, but also of His justice revealed by it. God's wrath against the unrighteousness of men is chiefly revealed by the righteousness and sufferings of Christ. "The Lord was pleased for His righteousness' sake." Both by requiring and appointing that righteousness, He magnified the law, and made it honorable. And though that righteousness consist in obedience and sufferings which continue for a time, yet since the remembrance of them will continue forever, the cross of Christ may be said to give eternal majesty and honor to that law, which is satisfied; that awful law, by which the universe (which is God's kingdom) is governed, to which the principalities and powers of heaven are subject; that law, which in condemning sin, banished the devil and his angels from heaven our first parents from Paradise, and peace from the earth. Considering, therefore, that God is the Judge and Lawgiver of the world, it is plain that His glory shines with unspeakable brightness in the cross of Christ, as the punishment of sin. But this is the very thing that hinders the lovers of sin from acknowledging the glory of the cross, because it shows so much of God's hatred of what they love. It would be useful for removing such prejudices, to consider, that though Christ's sacrifice shows the punishment of sin, yet, if we embrace that sacrifice, it only *shows* it to us. It takes it off our hands —it leaves us no more to do with it. And surely the beholding our danger, when we behold it as prevented, serves rather to increase than lessen our joy. By seeing the greatness of our danger, we see the greatness of our deliverance. The cross of Christ displays the glory of infinite justice, but not of justice only.

Here shines chiefly the glory of infinite mercy. There is nothing in the world more lovely or glorious than love and goodness itself; and this is the greatest instance of it that can be conceived. God's goodness appears in all His works; this is a principal part of the glory of the creation. We are taught to consider this lower world as a convenient habitation, built for man to dwell in; but, to allude to the apostle's expression, this gift we are speaking of should be accounted more worthy of honor than the world, "inasmuch as He who hath builded the house hath more honor than the house."

When God gave us His Son, He gave us an infinitely greater gift than the world. The Creator is infinitely more glorious than the creature, and the Son of God is the Creator of all things. God can make innumerable worlds by the word of His mouth; He has but one only Son; and He spared not His only Son, but gave Him up to the death of the cross for us all.

God's love to His people is from everlasting to everlasting; but from everlasting to everlasting there is no manifestation of it known, or conceivable by us, that can be compared to this. The light of the sun is always the same, but it shines brightest to us at noon: the cross of Christ was the noontide of everlasting love, the meridian splendor of eternal mercy. There were many bright manifestations of the same love before, but they were like the light of the morning, that shines more and more unto the perfect day; and that perfect day was when Christ was on the cross, when darkness covered all the land.

Comparisons can give but a very imperfect view of this love, which passeth knowledge. Though we should suppose that all the love of all the men that ever were, or will be on the earth, and all the love of the angels in heaven, united in one heart, it would be but a cold heart to that which was pierced by the soldier's spear. The Jews saw but blood and water, but faith can discern a bright ocean of eternal love flowing out of these wounds. We may have some impression of the glory of it, by considering its effects. We should consider all the spiritual and eternal blessings received by God's people for four thousand years before Christ was crucified, or that have been received since, or that will be received till the consummation of all things; all the deliverances from eternal misery; all the oceans of joy in heaven; the rivers of water of life, to be enjoyed to all eternity, by multitudes as the sand of the sea-shore. We should consider all these blessings as flowing from that love that was displayed in the cross of Christ.

Here shines also the glory of the incomprehensible wisdom of God, which consists in promoting the best ends by the fittest means. The ends of the cross are best in themselves, and the best for us that can be conceived: the glory of God, and the good of man. And the means by which it advances these ends are so fit and suitable, that the infinite depth of contrivance in them will be the admiration of the universe to eternity.

It is an easy thing to conceive the glory of the Creator, manifested in the good of an innocent creature; but the glory of the righteous Judge, manifested in the good of the guilty criminal, is the peculiar mysterious wisdom of the cross. It is easy to perceive God's righteousness declared in the punishment of sins; the cross alone declares "His righteousness for the remission of sins." It magnifies justice in the way of pardoning sin, and mercy in the way of punishing it. It shows justice more awful than if mercy had been excluded; and mercy more amiable than if justice had been dispensed with. It magnifies the law, and makes it honorable. It magnifies the criminal who broke the law; and the respect put upon the law makes him honorable likewise. Yea, this is so contrived, that every honor done to the criminal is an honor done to the law; and all the respect put upon the law, puts respect on the criminal. For every blessing the sinner receives, is for the sake of obedience and satisfaction made to the law; not by himself, but by another, who could put infinitely greater dignity on the law: and the satisfaction of that other for the sinner, puts the greatest dignity on him that he is capable of. Both the law and the sinner may "glory in the cross of Christ." Both of them receive eternal honor and glory by it.

The glories that are found separately in the other works of God are found united here. The joys of heaven glorify God's goodness;

the pains of hell glorify His justice; the cross of Christ glorifies both of them, in a more remarkable manner than heaven or hell glorifies any of them. There is more remarkable honor done to the justice of God by the sufferings of Christ, than by the torment of devils; and there is a more remarkable display of the goodness of God in the redemption of sinners, than in the joy of angels: so that we can conceive no object, in which we can discover such manifold wisdom, or so deep contrivance for advancing the glory of God.

The like may be said of its contrivance for the good of man. It heals all his diseases; it pardons all his sins. It is the sacrifice that removes the guilt of sin; it is the motive that removes the love of sin. It mortifies sin, and expiates it. It atones for disobedience, and it makes obedience acceptable. It excites to obedience; it purchases strength for obedience. It makes obedience practicable; it makes it delightful; it makes it in a manner unavoidable—it constrains to it. It is not only the motive to obedience, but the pattern of it. It satisfies the curse of the law, and fulfills the commands of it. Love is the fulfilling of the law; the sum of which is, the love of God, and of our neighbor. The cross of Christ is the highest instance of both. Christ's sufferings are to be considered as actions. Never action gave such glory to God; never action did such good to man. And it is the way to show our love to God and man, by promoting the glory of the one, and the good of the other.

Thus the sufferings of Christ teach us our duty by that love whence they flowed, and that good for which they were designed. But they teach us not only by the design of them, but also by the manner of His undergoing them. Submission to God, and forgiveness of our enemies, are two of the most difficult duties. The former is one of the chief expressions of love to God, and the latter of love to man. But the highest submission is, when a person submits to suffering, though free from guilt; and the highest forgiveness is, to forgive our murderers, especially if the murderers were persons who were obliged to us. As if a person not only should forgive them who took away his life, even though they owed him their own lives; but also desire others to forgive them, pray for them, and as much as possible excuse them. This was the manner of Christ's bearing His sufferings: "Father, Thy will be done;" and, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Thus we see how fit a means the cross is for promoting the best ends—for justification and sanctification. It would be too long to insist here in showing its manifold fitness for promoting also joy and peace here, and everlasting happiness hereafter: for, no doubt, it will be a great part of future happiness, to remember the way it was purchased, and to see the Lamb that was slain, at the right hand of Him who gave Him for that end. The things already adduced show, that the incomprehensible wisdom of God is gloriously displayed in the cross of Christ, because it hath such amazing contrivance in it for advancing the good of man, as well as the glory of God; for that is the design of it, to show the glory of God and good-will toward man.

But it is not only the glory of Divine wisdom that shines in this blessed object, but also the glory of Divine power. This, to them who know not Christ, is no small paradox: but to them who believe, Christ crucified is "the power of God, and the wisdom of God." The Jews thought Christ's crucifixion a demonstration of His want of power. Hence they upbraided Him, that He who wrought so many miracles, suffered Himself to hang upon the cross. But this itself was the greatest miracle of all. They asked, why He who saved others, saved not Himself? They named the reason, without taking heed to it. That was the very reason why at that time He saved not Himself, because He saved others; because He was willing and able to save others. The *motive* of His enduring the cross was powerful—Divine love; stronger than death; the *fruits* of it powerful—Divine grace; the power of God to salvation; making new creatures, raising souls from the dead: these are acts of omnipotence. We are ready to admire chiefly the power of God in the visible world; but the soul of man is a far nobler creature than it. We justly admire the power of the Creator in the motion of the heavenly bodies; but the motion of souls toward God as their center, is far more glorious: the effects of the same power, far more eminent, and far more lasting.

The wounds of Christ seemed effects of weakness; but it is easy to observe incomparable strength appearing in them. We should consider what it was that bruised Him: "He was bruised for our iniquities." The Scripture represents them as a great burden: and describes us as all lying helpless under it, as a people laden with iniquity. Christ bore our sins in His own body on the tree; He bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows; not these we feel here only, but those we deserved to feel hereafter: "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." We might well say, with Cain, our punishment was more than we were able to bear. This might be said to every one of us apart. But it was not the sins of one that He bore: He bore the sins of many; of multitudes as the sand on the sea-shore: and the sins of every one of them as numerous. This was the heaviest and most terrible weight in the world.

The curse of the law was a weight sufficient to crush a world. They who first brought it on themselves found it so. It sunk legions of angels who excel in strength, when they had abused that strength against the law, from the heaven of heavens to the bottomless pit. The same weight that crushed rebel angels, threatened man for joining with them. Before man could bear it, before any person could have his own portion of it, it behooved, as it were, to be divided into numberless parcels. Man, after numberless ages, would have borne but a small part of it. "The wrath to come," would have been always wrath to come, to all eternity; there would have been still infinitely more to bear. Christ only had strength to bear it all, in a manner, at once; to bear it all alone. None of the people were with Him. Our burden and our help were laid on One who was mighty; and His bearing them was a glorious manifestation of His might—of the noblest kind of might—that He was "mighty to save."

It is true, that load bruised Him; but we should not be surprised at that, if we considered the dreadfulness of the shock Could we conceive the weight of eternal justice ready to fall down, like lightning, with violence upon a world of malefactors, and view that sacred body interposed betwixt the load of wrath from above, and the heirs of wrath below, we should not wonder at these bruises, we should not despise them. We should consider the event, had that wrath fallen lower. Had it met with no obstacle, it would have made havoc of another kind. This world would have been worse than a chaos, and been covered with the dismal effects of vindictive justice, and Divine righteous vengeance.

Although His sacred flesh was both mangled and marred with that dismal load, yet we should consider that it sustained it. Here was incomparable strength, that it sustained that shock which would have ground mankind into powder; and He sustained it (as was said before) alone. He let no part of it fall lower: they who take sanctuary under this blessed covert, are so safe, that they have no more to do with that load of wrath but to look to it. To allude to the Psalmist's expressions: "It shall not come nigh them; only with their eyes they shall behold, and see the reward of the wicked." But they shall see it given to that righteous One; and all that in effect is left to them in this matter, is, by faith, to look and behold what a load of vengeance was hovering over their guilty heads;

and, that guiltless and spotless body being interposed, how it was crushed in an awful manner.

But it is the end of the conflict that shows on which side the victory is. In that dreadful struggle, Christ's body was brought as low as the grave; but though the righteous fall, He rises again. Death was undermost in the struggle. It was Christ that conquered in falling, and completed the conquest in rising. The cause, design, and effects of these wounds, show incomparable power and strength appearing in them. The same strength appeared in His behavior under them: and the manner in which He bore them, we see in the history of His death. He bore them with patience, and with pity and compassion toward others. A small part of His sorrow would have crushed the strongest spirit on earth to death. The constitution of man is not able to bear too great violence of joy or grief; either the one or the other is sufficient to unhinge our frame. Christ's griefs were absolutely incomparable, but His strength was a match for them.

These considerations serve to show, that it is the greatest stupidity to have diminishing thoughts of the wounds of the Redeemer. Yet, because this has been the stumbling-block to the Jews, and foolishness to the Gentiles, and many professing Christians have not suitable impressions of it, it is proper to consider this subject a little more particularly. It is useful to observe how the Scripture represents the whole of Christ's humiliation as one great action, by which He defeated the enemies of God and man, and founded a glorious everlasting monarchy. The prophets, and particularly the Psalmist, speak so much of Christ as a powerful Conqueror, whose enemies were to be made His footstool, that the Jews do still contend that their Messiah is to be a powerful temporal prince, and a great fighter of battles; one who is to subdue their enemies by fire and sword; and by whom they themselves were to be raised above all the nations of the world. If pride and the love of earthly things did not blind them, it were easy to see, that the descriptions of the prophets are vastly too high to be capable of so low a meaning. This will be evident by taking a short view of them: which at the same time will show the glory of that great action just now spoken of, by showing the greatness of the design, and the effects of it.

The prophets ofttimes speak more expressly of the Messiah as a great King, which is a name of the greatest earthly dignity. The hand of Pilate was overruled to write that title of honor even on His cross. The glory of the kingdom that He was to found is represented in very magnificent expressions by the prophet Daniel.

Here are lively representations of unparalleled greatness, an everlasting kingdom to be founded, strong obstacles to be removed, powerful enemies to be defeated.

It is useful to observe the *universal importance* of this design; no part of the universe was unconcerned in it.

The glory of the Creator was eminently to be displayed; all the Divine Persons were to be gloriously manifested; the Divine attributes to be magnified; the Divine works and ways to be honored. The earth was to be redeemed, hell conquered, heaven purchased, the law to be magnified and established, its commandments to be fulfilled, its curse to be suffered; the law was to be satisfied, and the criminal that broke it to be saved, and his tempter and accuser to be defeated. The head of the old serpent was to be bruised, his works to be destroyed, and the principalities and powers of darkness to be spoiled, and triumphed over openly. The principalities and powers of heaven were to receive new matter of everlasting hallelujahs, and new companions to join in them; the fallen angels were to lose their old subjects, and the blessed angels to receive new fellow-citizens. No wonder this is called the making a new heaven and a new earth; and even the face of hell was to be altered. Surely a more glorious design can not be conceived; and the more we consider it, the more we may see the greatness of the action that accomplished it.

As the design was great, the preparations were solemn. The stage of it was to be this earth; it was chiefly concerned in it; it was solemnly prepared for it. This is the view given us of the providences that preceded it. They fitted the stage of the world for the great event in the fullness of time. If we saw clearly the whole chain of them, we should see how they pointed toward this, as their center, and how they contributed to honor it—or rather it reflected the greatest honor upon them. The forecited prophecies in Daniel, besides several others, are instances of this: they show how the great revolutions in the heathen world were subservient to this design, particularly the succession of the four monarchies represented in Nebuchadnezzar's dream: their rise and overthrow were subservient to the rise of this monarchy, never to be overthrown.

We see but a small part of the chain of Providence, and even that very darkly; but this perhaps is worth the observing briefly, that universal empire came gradually from the eastern to the western parts of the world, from the Assyrians and Persians, to the Greeks and Romans. By this means greater communication and correspondence than formerly were opened between distant nations of the earth, from the rising to the setting of the sun. The kingdom, repre sented by the stone cut out of the mountain, was to extend to both. Whatever we think of this, it is certain that if we saw the plot of Providence unfolded, we should see these and other revolutions contributing to the fullness of time, and adjusting the world to that state and form of things that was fittest for the Redeemer's appearance.

These were a part of the preparations for the work in view; but they were but a part of them: for all the sacrifices offered every morning and evening for so many ages, were preparations for it, and shadows of it. The same may be said of other figures and types. The Church of God, for four thousand years, waited, with longing looks for this salvation of the Lord: they were refreshed with the sacrifices that prefigured it. The heathens themselves had their sacrifices. They had sinfully lost the tradition of the true religion and the Messiah, handed down from Noah; yet Providence ordered it so that they did not wholly lose the right of sacrificing. There is reason to acknowledge a particular Providence preserving tradition in this point; for how otherwise could it enter into men's heads to serve their gods by sacrificing their beasts? It was useful that the world should not be entirely unacquainted with the notion of a sacrifice. The substitution of the innocent in the room of the guilty, pointed toward this great oblation, which was to make all others to cease. The predictions of the prophets in different ages, from Moses to Malachi, were also preparations for this great event. John the Baptist appeared as the morning-star, the harbinger of the Day-spring from on high: it was his particular office to prepare the way of the Lord before Him. The evidence of the prophecies was bright: the Jews saw the time approaching; their expectations were big. Counterfeit Messiahs took advantage of it: and not only the Jews, but even the heathens, probably by report from them, had a notion of an incomparably great person who was to appear about that time. These, besides many other great things, serve to show what glorious preparations and pomp went before the great work we are speaking of.

Here it may perhaps occur to some, that it is strange an action that had such great preparations before it happened, was so little observed when it did happen. Strictly speaking, this was not true. It was not much noticed, indeed, among blind and ignorant men —this was foretold; but it had a noble theater—the whole universe were, in effect, spectators of it. The Scripture teacheth us to reflect on this; particularly to consider the principalities and powers in heavenly places, as attentive lookers on this glorious performance. We may infer this from Eph. iii. 10, besides other Scriptures.

These morning-stars shouted for joy, and sang together at the old creation. This was a new creation to sing at; a more amazing spectacle than the old. In that, the Son of God acted in the form of God; now He was to act the low form of a servant. Nor was that the lowest part of it; He was to suffer in the form of a criminal; the Judge in the form of a malefactor; the Lawgiver in the room of the rebel. The creation was a mean theater for so great an event, and the noblest creatures unworthy judges of such an incomprehensible performance: its true glory was the approbation of its infinite Contriver, and that He, at whose command it was done, was fully well pleased with it.

Yet to us, on whose natures example has so much influence, it may be useful to consider the honorable crowd of admirers and spectators that this performance had; and to reflect how Heaven beheld with veneration what was treated on earth with contempt. It was a large theater—multitudes as sand on the sea-shore—a glorious company. In Scripture, angels, in comparison of men, are called gods. We are not sensible of their glory, which struck prophets almost dead with fear, and tempted an apostle to idolatry; but these, when the First-begotten is brought into the world—all these gods are commanded to worship Him. The place of Scripture where angels are called gods, is the place where they are commanded to worship Christ: and, according to the same apostle, it was a special time of His receiving this glory from the hosts of heaven, when His glory was to be vailed among the inhabitants of the earth. It is evident that they were spectators of all that He did in that state, and no doubt they were attentive spectators; they desired to look, as it were, with outstretched necks, into these things. Nor *could* they be unconcerned spectators: they were, on divers accounts, interested. They did not not need a redemption themselves; but they delighted in ours: they loved Christ, and they loved His people: their love interested them in the glory of the one and the other. All we know of their work and office, as Luther expresses it, "is to sing in heaven, and minister on earth;" our *redemption* gave occasion for both. They sang for joy when it began at Christ's birth; they went with gladness on messages of it beforehand to the prophets, and to to the Virgin Mary; they fed Christ in the desert; they attended Him in His agony, and at His resurrection; and they accompanied Him at His ascension. They were concerned to look into these things in time, that were to be remembered to all eternity; and into that performance on earth, that was to be the matter of eternal hallelujahs in heaven.

It should not therefore hinder our esteem of this great work, that the great men on earth took no notice of it. They were but mean and blind, ignorant and vulgar, compared to the powers and thrones just now mentioned, who beheld it with veneration. It is no disparagement to an excellent performance, that it is not admired by ignorant persons who do not understand it.

The principalities in heaven understood, and therefore admired. Nor were the principalities and powers of darkness wholly ignorant of it: their example should not be a pattern to us; but what they beheld with anguish we should behold with transport. Their plot was to make the earth, if possible, a province of hell. They had heard of that glorious counterplot; they were alarmed at the harbingers of it; they looked on and saw their plot, step by step, defeated, and the projects of eternal mercy go on. All the universe, therefore, were interested on-lookers at this blessed undertaking. Heaven looked on with joy, and hell with terror, to observe the event of an enterprise that was contrived from everlasting, expected since the fall of man, and that was to be celebrated to all eternity.

Thus we have before us several things that show the glory of the performance in view; the *design*, of universal importance; the *preparation*, incomparably solemn; a company of the most honorable, attentive *spectators*. As to the performance itself, it is plain it is not a subject for the tongues of men. The tongues of men are not for a subject above the thoughts of angels; they are but desiring to look into it; they have not seen fully through it: that is the work of eternity. Men may speak and write of it, but it is not so proper to describe it, as to tell that it can not be described. We may write about it, but if all its glory were described, the world would not contain its books. We may speak of it, but the most we can say about it is to say that it is unspeakable; and the most that we know is, that it passeth knowledge. It is He that performed this work that can truly declare it; it is He who contrived it that can describe it. He it is who knows it. None knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom He shall reveal Him. It is from Him we should seek this knowledge. What of it is to be had here is but in part, but it leads us to the place where it will be perfect. Here we think as children, we speak as children, yet we are not therefore to neglect thinking or speaking of it. Our thoughts are useless without contemplating it, our speech useless without praising it. The rest of the history of the world, except as it relates to this, is but a history of trifles or confusion—dreams and vapors of sick-brained men. What we know of it here is but little, but that little incomparably transcends all other knowledge, and all other earthly things are but loss and dung to it. The least we can do, is, with the angels, to desire to look into these things; and we should put up these desires to Him who can satisfy them, that He may shine into our hearts by "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God." The true object of this knowledge is the glory of God, the means of obtaining it is light shining from God, and as to the place into which it shines, it is into our hearts. We are therefore to desire that light from Him who is light itself. But our prayers should be joined with other means, particularly that meditation which Paul recommends to Timothy. We ought to meditate on these things, so as to give ourselves wholly to them. Our meditation should be as lively and as like to seeing the object before us as possible. But it is not by strength of imagination that the soul is profited in this case, but by having the eyes of the understanding enlightened.

The makers and worshipers of images pretend to help us in this matter by pictures presented to the eye of the body; but it is not the eye of sense, or force of imagination, but the eye of faith, that can give us true notions and right conceptions of this object. Men may paint Christ's outward sufferings, but not that inward excellency from whence their virtue flowed, namely, His glory in Himself, and His goodness to us. Men may paint one crucified, but how can that distinguish the Saviour from the criminals on each side of Him? We may paint His hands and His feet fixed to the cross, but who can paint how those hands used always to be stretched forth for relieving the afflicted, and curing the diseased? or how those feet went always about doing good? and how they cure more diseases, and do more good now than ever! We may paint the outward appearance of His sufferings, but not the inward bitterness, or invisible causes of them. Men can paint the cursed tree, but not the curse of the law that made it so. Men can paint Christ bearing the cross to Calvary, but not Christ bearing the sins of many. We may describe the nails piercing His sacred flesh, but who can describe the eternal justice, piercing both flesh and spirit? We may describe the soldier's spear, but not the arrows of the Almighty; the cup of vinegar which He but tasted, but not the cup of wrath which He drank out to the lowest dregs; the derision of the Jews, but not the desertion of the Almighty forsaking His Son, that He might never forsake us, who were His enemies.

The sorrows He suffered, and the benefits He purchased, are equally beyond description. Though we describe His hands and His feet mangled and pierced, who can describe how in one hand, as it were, He grasped multitudes of souls ready to sink into ruin, and in the other hand an everlasting inheritance to give them? or how these bruised feet crushed the old Serpent's head, and trampled on death and hell, and sin the author of both? We may describe the blood issuing from His body, but not the waters of life streaming from the same source—oceans of spiritual and eternal blessings. We may paint how that blood covered His body, but not how it sprinkles the souls of others, yea, sprinkles many nations. We may paint the crown of thorns He wore, but not the crown of glory He purchased. Happy were it for us if our faith had as lively views of this object, as our imagination ofttimes has of incomparably less important objects! then would the pale face of our Saviour show more powerful attractions than all the brightest objects in nature besides. Notwithstanding the gloomy aspect of death, it would discover such transcendent majesty as would make all the glory in the world lose its relish with us: we should see then, indeed, the awful frowns of justice, but these frowns are not at us, but at our enemies—our murderers—that is, our sins. The cross shows Christ pitying His own murderers, but it shows no pity to our murderers, therefore we may see the majesty of eternal justice tempered with the mildness of infinite compassion. Infinite pity is an object worth looking at, especially by creatures in distress and danger. There Death doth appear in state, as the executioner of the law, but there he also appears deprived of his sting with regard to us. There we may hear also the sweetest melody in the world to the awakened sinner; that peace-speaking blood that speaks better things than that of Abel; the sweetest and loudest voice in the world—louder than the thunder of Sinai. Its voice reacheth heaven and earth, pleading with God in behalf of men, and beseeching men to be reconciled to God; speaking the most comfortable and the most seasonable things in the world to objects in distress and danger—*salvation* and *deliverance*.

Of the various views we can take of this blessed work, this is the most suitable—to consider it as the most glorious deliverance that ever was or will be. Other remarkable deliverances of God's people are considered as shadows and figures of this. Moses, Joshua, David, and Zerubbabel, were types of this great Joshua. According to His name, so is He, JESUS, a Deliverer. The number of the persons delivered shows the glory of this delivery to be unparalleled. It was but one single nation that Moses delivered, though indeed it was a glorious deliverance, relieving six hundred thousand at once, and a great deal more; but this was incomparably more extensive. The Apostle John calls the multitude of the redeemed "a multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues." The unparalleled glory of this deliverance appears, not only in the *number* of the delivered, but also in the *nature* of the deliverance. It was not men's bodies only that He delivered, but immortal souls, more valuable than the world. It was not from such a bondage as that of Egypt, but one as far beyond it as eternal misery is worse than temporal bodily toil: so that nothing can equal the wretchedness of the state from which they are delivered, but the blessedness of that to which they are brought.

But here we should not forget the *opposition* made against this deliverance: it was the greatest that can withstand any good design. The apostle teaches us to consider the opposition of flesh and blood as far inferior to that of principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places. The devil is called "the god of this world;" and himself and his angels, "the rulers of the darkness of this world." They had obtained a dominion over the world (excepting that small corner Judea), for many ages, by the consent of the inhabitants. They found them not only pliable, but fond of their chains, and in love with their bondage. But they had heard of this intended enterprise of supreme power and mercy, this invasion and descent upon their dominions; they had heard of the design of bruising their head, overturning their government, making their slaves to revolt. Long experience had made them expert in the black art of perdition; long success made them confident; and their malice still pushed them on to opposition, whatever might be the success. As they were no doubt apprised of this designed deliverance, and alarmed at the signs of its approach, they made all preparations to oppose it; mustered all their forces; employed all their skill; and, as all was at stake, made their last efforts for a kind of decisive engagement. They armed every proper instrument, and set every engine of spiritual destruction at work; temptations, persecutions, violence, slander, treachery, counterfeit Messiahs, and the like.

Their Adversary appeared in a form that did not seem terrible; not only as a man, but as one "despised of the people," accounted as "a worm, and no man," but this made the event more glorious. It was a spectacle worth the admiration of the universe, to see the despised Galilean turn all the artillery of hell back upon itself; to see One in the likeness of the Son of Man, wresting the keys of hell and death out of the hand of the devil; to see Him entangling the rulers of darkness in their own nets; and making them ruin their designs with their own stratagems. They made one disciple betray

Him, and another deny Him; they made the Jews accuse Him, and the Romans crucify Him. But the Wonderful Counselor was more than a match for the old Serpent, and the Lion of the tribe of Judah too hard for the roaring lion. The devices of these powers of darkness were, in the event, made means of spoiling and triumphing over themselves. The greatest cruelty of devils and their instruments, was made subservient to the designs of the infinite mercy of God; and that hideous sin of the sons of men, overruled in a perfectly holy manner, for making an end of sin, and bringing in everlasting righteousness. The opposition made to this deliverance did but advance its glory; particularly the opposition it met with from those for whose good it was intended, that is, sinners themselves: this served to enhance the glory of mysterious long-suffering and mercy.

It would take a long time to insist on all the opposition which this Deliverer met with, both from the enemies of sinners, and from sinners themselves; but at last He weathered the storm, surmounted difficulties, led captivity captive, obtained a perfect conquest, purchased an everlasting inheritance, founded an everlasting kingdom, triumphed on the cross, and died with the publication of His victory in His mouth, "It is finished."

The world is represented as silent before the Lord, when He rose up to work this great deliverance; and, as was shown before, no part of the world was unconcerned in it. The expectation was great, but the performance could not but surpass it. Every part of it was perfect, and every circumstance graceful; nothing deficient, nothing superflous, nothing but what became the dignity of the Person, and the eternal wisdom of the contrivance. Every thing was suited to the glorious design, and all the means proportioned to the end. The foundation of the everlasting kingdom was laid, before it was observed by the men that opposed it; and so laid that it was impossible for the gates of hell to prevail against it; all things adjusted for completing the deliverance, and for securing it against all endeavors and attempts to overturn it. The great Deliverer, in that low disguise, wrought through His design, so as none could oppose it, without advancing it to the full satisfaction of that infinite wisdom that devised it, and the eternal admiration of the creatures that beheld it.

The Father was well pleased; heaven and earth rejoiced, and were astonished; the powers of hell fell down like lightning. In heaven, loud acclamations and applauses, and new songs of praises began, that are not ended yet, and never will—they will still increase. Still, new redeemed criminals from the earth, saved from the gates of hell, and entering the gates of heaven, with a new song of praise in their mouths, add to the ever-growing melody, of which they shall never be weary: for that is their rest, their labor of love; never to rest, day nor night, giving praise and glory to Him that sits on the throne, and to the Lamb at His right hand; who redeemed them from all nations and tongues, washing them in His own blood, and making them kings and priests unto God.

But still, an objection may be made concerning the little honor and respect this work met with on earth, where it was performed. This, duly considered, instead of being an objection, is a commendation of it. Sin had so corrupted the taste of mankind, that it had been a kind of reflection on this work, if it had suited it. Herein the beauty of it appears, that it was above that depraved, wretched state which it was designed to cure; and that it did actually work that change on innumerable multitudes of all nations.

If the cross of Christ met with such contempt on earth, it met also with incomparable honor. It made the greatest revolution in the world that ever happened since the creation, or that will ever happen till Shiloh come again; a more glorious, a more lasting change than ever was produced by all the princes and conquerors in the world. It conquered multitudes of souls, and established a sovereignty over men's thoughts, wills, and affections. This was a conquest to which human power hath no proportion. Persecutors turned apostles; and vast numbers of pagans, after knowing the cross of Christ, suffered death and torments cheerfully, to honor it. The growing light shone from east to west, and opposition was not only useless, but subservient to it. The changes it produced are sometimes described by the prophets in the most magnificent expressions. Thus, for instance, it turned the parched grounds into pools of water; made the habitations of dragons to become places of grass, and reeds, and rushes; made wildernesses to bud and blossom as the rose. It wrought this change among us in the utmost isles of the Gentiles. We ought to compare our present privileges with the state of our forefathers, before they knew this blessed object; and we shall find it owing to the glory of the cross of Christ, that we, who worship the living God, in order to the eternal enjoyment of Him, are not worshiping the sun, moon, and stars, or sacrificing to idols.

But the chief effects of the cross of Christ, and which show most of its glory, are its inward effects on the souls of men. There, as was before hinted, it makes a new creation. Christ is formed in them, the source and the hope of glory. This is a glorious workmanship, the image of God on the soul of man. But since these effects of the cross of Christ are secret, and the shame put upon it ofttimes too public, and since human nature is so much influenced by example, it will be useful to take such a view of the honor done to this object, as may arm us against the bad example of stupid unbelievers.

The cross of Christ is an object of such incomparable brightness, that it spreads a glory round it to all the nations of the earth, all the corners of the universe, all the generations of time, and all the ages of eternity. The greatest actions or events that ever happened on earth, filled with their splendor and influence but a moment of time and a point of space; the splendor of this great object fills immensity and eternity. If we take a right view of its glory, we shall see it, contemplated with attention, spreading influence, and attracting looks from times past, present and to come; from heaven, earth, and hell; angels, saints, and devils. We shall see it to be both the object of the deepest admiration of the creatures, and the perfect approbation of the infinite Creator. We shall see the best part of mankind, the Church of God, for four thousand years, looking forward to it before it happened; new generations, yet unborn, rising up to admire and honor it in continual succession, till time shall be no more; innumerable multitudes of angels and saints looking back to it with holy transport, to the remotest ages of eternity. Other glories decay by length of time; if the splendor of this object change, it will be only by increasing. The visible sun will spend his beams in process of time, and, as it were, grow dim with age; this object hath a rich stock of beams which eternity can not exhaust. If saints and angels grow in knowledge, the splendor of this object will be still increasing. It is unbelief that intercepts its beams. Unbelief takes place only on earth: there is no such thing in heaven or in hell. It will be a great part of future blessedness, to remember the object that purchased it; and of future punishment, to remember the object that offered deliverance from it. It will add life to the beams of love in heaven, and make the flames of hell burn fiercer. Its beams will not only adorn the regions of light, but pierce the regions of darkness. It will be the desire of the saints in light, and the great eye-sore of the prince of darkness and his subjects.

Its glory produces powerful effects wherever it shines. They who behold this glory are transformed into the same image. An Ethiopian may look long enough to the visible sun before it change his black color; but this does it. It melts cold and frozen hearts; it breaks stony hearts; it pierces adamants; it penetrates through thick darkness. How justly is it called marvelous light!

It gives eyes to the blind to look to itself; and not only to the blind, but to the dead. It is the light of life: a powerful light. Its energy is beyond the force of thunder; and it is more mild than the dew on the tender grass.

But it is impossible fully to describe all its effects, unless we could fully reckon up all the spiritual and eternal evils it prevents, all the riches of grace and glory it purchases, and all the Divine perfections it displays. It has this peculiar to it, that as it is full of glory itself, it communicates glory to all that behold it aright. It gives them a glorious robe of righteousness; their God is their glory; it calls them to glory and virtue; it gives them the Spirit of God and of glory; it gives them joy unspeakable and full of glory here, and an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory hereafter.

It communicates a glory to all other objects, according as they have any relation to it. It adorns the universe; it gives a luster to nature, and to Providence; it is the greatest glory of this lower world, that its Creator was for awhile its inhabitant. A poor landlord thinks it a lasting honor to his cottage, that he has once lodged a prince or emperor. With how much more reason may our poor cottage, this earth, be proud of it, that the Lord of glory was its tenant from His birth to His death! yea, that He rejoiced in the habitable parts of it before it had a beginning, even from everlasting!

It is the glory of the world that He who formed it, dwelt on it; of the air, that He breathed in it; of the sun, that it shone on Him; of the ground, that it bore Him; of the sea, that He walked on it; of the elements, that they nourished Him; of the waters, that they refreshed Him; of us men, that He lived and died among us, yea, that He lived and died for us; that He assumed our flesh and blood, and carried it to the highest heavens, where it shines as the eternal ornament and wonder of the creation of God. It gives also a luster to Providence. It is the chief event that adorns the records of time, and enlivens the history of the universe. It is the glory of the various great lines of Providence, that they point at this as their center; that they prepared the way for its coming; that after its coming they are subservient to the ends of it, though in a way indeed to us at present mysterious and unsearchable. Thus we know that they either fulfill the promises of the crucified Jesus, or His threatenings; and show either the happiness of receiving Him, or the misery of rejecting Him.

DISCOURSE FIFTY-NINTH.

ROBERT WALKER.

This eminent divine of the Scottish Church, was born at Canongate, in 1716, and received a regular education at the University of Edinburg. He was ordained, in 1738, minister of Straiton; and in 1746 was transferred to the second charge of South Leith. In 1754 he was called to be one of the ministers of Edinburg in the High Church, which position he filled with distinguished ability. In the month of February, 1782, he was seized with a fit of apoplexy; and though recovering to some extent, he at length suddenly died in April, 1783.

Dr. Blair, who was the colleague of Walker, speaks of him in high terms, representing him as a man of deep piety, solid judgment, and powers of the most correct taste, which gave elegance, neatness, and chaste simplicity to his discourses. Walker's sermons have received the highest commendations from the ablest divines of all countries. They may perhaps be regarded as among the safest models for the study of young ministers. Doctrinal and evangelical, they are at the same time highly practical, always logical, perspicuous in style, completely ingrained with happy Scriptural quotations, and conveyed with a manly, forcible eloquence, and a devout, earnest spirit. Walker possessed the faultless beauty of Blair, without the elegant frigidity of his thoughts, which, as Foster says, "*became cooled and stiffened to numbness in waiting so long to be dressed.*" The sweet invitings of the compassionate Saviour have seldom been set forth in a more charming, yet faithful manner, and in a more winning and affectionate spirit, than in the following discourse.

THE HEAVY LADEN INVITED TO CHRIST.

"Come unto Me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."—Matt. xi. 28.

It was prophesied of our Lord long before His manifestation in the flesh, that He should "proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." And lo! here He doth it in the kindest and most endearing manner, offering *rest*, or spiritual relief, to every "laboring and heavy laden" sinner. "Come unto Me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

In discoursing from which words, I propose, in dependence upon Divine aid:

First. To open the character of those to whom the invitation is addressed;

Secondly. To explain the invitation itself, and show what is included in *coming* to Christ. After which I shall endeavor, in the

Third place. To illustrate the gracious condescending promise with which our Lord enforces the call: "I will give you rest."

I begin with the character of those to whom the invitation is addressed. They are such, you see, as "labor, and are heavy laden;" that is, who feel the unsupportable load of guilt, and the galling fetters of corrupt affections, and earnestly long to be delivered from both; for these were the persons whom our Saviour always regarded as the peculiar objects of His attention and care. By our fatal apostasy, we forfeited at once our innocence and our happiness; we became doubly miserable, liable to the justice of God, and slaves to Satan and our own corruptions. But few, comparatively speaking, are sensible of this misery! The bulk of mankind are so hot in the pursuit of perishing trifles, that they can find no leisure seriously to examine their spiritual condition. These, indeed, have a load upon them, of weight more than sufficient to sink them into perdition; but they are not "heavy laden" in the sense of my text. Our Saviour plainly speaks to those who feel their burden, and are groaning under it; otherwise the promise of rest, or deliverance, could be no inducement to bring them to Him. And the call is particularly addressed to such, for two obvious reasons:

First. Because our Lord knew well that none else would comply with it. "The full soul loathes the honey-comb." Such is the pride of our hearts, that each of us would wish to be a saviour to himself, and to purchase heaven by his own personal merit. This was the "rock of offense" upon which the Jews stumbled and fell: they could not bear the thought of being indebted to the righteousness of another for pardon and acceptance with God; for so the apostle testifies concerning them. "Being ignorant of God's righteousness, they went about to establish their own righteousness, and did not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God." And still this method of justifying sinners is opposed and rejected by every "natural man." He feels not his disease, and therefore treats the physician with contempt and scorn: whereas the soul that is enlightened by the Spirit of God, and awakened to a sense of its guilt and pollution, lies prostrate before the mercy-seat, crying out with Paul when struck to the ground, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" It was therefore with peculiar significancy, that our Lord introduced His sermon upon the Mount by adjudging the kingdom of heaven to the "poor in spirit," placing humility in the front of all the other graces, as being the entrance into religious temper, the beginning of the Divine life, the first step of the soul in its return to God.

Secondly. The "laboring and heavy laden" are particularly distinguished, because otherwise, persons in that situation, hopeless of relief, might be in danger of excluding themselves from the offer of mercy. If there was only a general call to come to the Saviour, the humble convinced soul, pressed down with a sense of its guilt and depravity, might be ready to object, Surely it can not be such a worthless and wicked creature as I am, to whom the Lord directs His invitation. And therefore, He "who will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax," doth kindly encourage them by this special address, that the very thing which to themselves would appear the greatest obstacle in the way of mercy, might become the means of assuring them that they are the very persons for whom mercy is prepared.

Let this, then, encourage every weary, self-condemning sinner. The greater your guilt appears in your own eye, the greater ground you have to expect relief if you apply for it. Mercy looks for nothing but an affecting sense of the need of mercy. Say not, If my burden were of a lesser weight, I might hope to be delivered from it; for no burden is too heavy for Omnipotence: He who is "mighty to save," can easily remove the most oppressive load; "His blood cleanseth from all sin." and "by Him all who believe are justified from all things." This great Physician did not come to heal some slight distempers, but to cure those inveterate plagues, which none besides Himself was able to cure. Whatever your disease be, it shall neither reproach His skill nor His power, and all that He requires on your part is a submissive temper to use the means He prescribes, with a firm reliance upon their virtue and efficacy. If you are truly convinced that your guilt is so great, and your corruptions so strong that none in heaven or on earth can save you from them but Christ alone—if you are groaning under the burden of sin, and can find no rest till pardoning mercy and sanctifying grace brings you relief, then are you in the very posture which my text describes, and I may warrantably say unto you what Martha said to Mary, "Arise, quickly, the Master is come, and calleth for thee." And this is His call, "Come unto Me." Which is the

Second thing I proposed to explain. Now, for understanding this, it will be necessary to remind you of the different characters which our Lord sustains; or, in other words, the important offices which He executes as our Redeemer. These, you know, are three, to wit, the offices of a Prophet, of a Priest, and of a King; in each of which the Lord Jesus must be distinctly regarded by every soul that comes to Him. Accordingly, you may observe, that in this gracious invitation He exhibits Himself to our view in all these characters; for to the condescending offer of removing our guilt, He immediately annexes the command, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me."

Such is our misery by the fall, that we are not only become the objects of God's righteous displeasure, and liable to that awful punishment which was the penalty of the first covenant, but our nature is wholly diseased and corrupted; so that "in us, in our flesh, dwelleth no good thing." Our understanding is darkened, filled with prejudices against the truth, and incapable of discerning spiritual objects: "For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, they are foolishness to Him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Our will is stubborn and rebellious, like "an iron sinew," which no force can bend; so inflexible in its opposition to the Divine law that it is called in Scripture "enmity against God;" and all our affections are wild and ungovernable, deaf to the voice of reason and conscience, in perpetual discord among themselves, and wholly alienated from God, in whom alone they should unite and center. Such a Saviour, therefore, was necessary for our relief, as could effectually remedy all those evils, and not only redeem us from wrath, but likewise prepare us for happiness, by restoring our nature to that original perfection from which it had fallen.

For this end, our Lord Jesus Christ, that He might be in all respects furnished for His great undertaking, was solemnly invested by His heavenly Father with each of the important offices I have named; that our understanding being enlightened by His Divine teaching, and our will subdued by His regal power, we might be capable of enjoying the fruits of that pardon, which, as our great High Priest, He hath purchased with His blood. Now in all these characters the Scriptures propose Him to our faith, and we do not comply with the invitation in my text, unless we come to Him for the proper work of each office, and embrace Him in the full extent of His commission, that "of God He may be made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

It is true, indeed, that the soul, in its first approach to Christ, doth principally regard Him as a priest or a sacrifice; and therefore faith, as it is employed for justification, or pardon, is emphatically styled "Faith in His blood." To this God looks when He justifies the sinner; He views him as sprinkled with the blood of atonement, and therefore to the same blood the sinner must necessarily look upon his first application to Christ. When the criminal under the law fled to the horns of the altar, he considered the temple rather as a place of protection than of worship. The authority of a teacher, and the majesty of a king, are objects of terror to a self-condemning sinner, and by no means suit his present necessity. Christ, as suffering, and "bearing our sins in His own body on the tree," is the only object that can yield him relief and comfort; for where shall he find the rest of his soul but where God found the satisfaction of His justice?

Nevertheless, though Christ upon the cross be the first and most immediate object of faith, yet the believer doth not stop there; but, having discovered a sufficient atonement for his guilt, he proceeds to contemplate the other characters of his Redeemer, and heartily approves of them all as perfectly adapted to all his necessities. He hearkens to His instruction, and cheerfully submits to His yoke, and covets nothing so much as to be taught and governed by Him. The ingenuity of faith speaketh after this manner: Seeing Christ is my Priest to expiate my guilt, it is but just and reasonable that He should be my Prophet to teach me, and my King to rule over me; that as I live by His merits, I should also walk by His law.

O blessed Jesus! saith the soul that comes to Him, Thou true and living way to the Father! I adore Thy condescending grace in becoming a sacrifice and sin-offering for me: and now, encouraged by Thy kind invitation, I flee to Thee as my only city of refuge; I come to Thee "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked"—I have no price to offer Thee, no goodness at all to recommend me to Thy favor: "laboring, and heavy laden," I cast myself at Thy feet, and look to Thy free mercy alone for the removal of this burden, which, without Thy interposition, must sink me down to the lowest hell. Abhorring myself in every view I can take, I embrace Thee for my righteousness; sprinkled with Thy atoning blood, I shall not fear the destroying angel—justice hath already had its triumph on Thy cross, and therefore I take Thy cross for my sanctuary. This is my rest; and here will I stay, for I like it well.

Nor is this my only errand to Thee, O thou complete Saviour! I bring to Thee a dark benighted mind to be illuminated with saving knowledge. "Thou hast the words of eternal life;" "in Thee are hid all the treasures of wisdom:" I therefore resign my understanding to Thy teaching: for "No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and those to whom the Son shall reveal Him."

I likewise choose Thee for my Lord and my King; for "Thou art altogether lovely," and in every character necessary to my soul. Here are enemies whom none can vanquish but Thyself; here are corruptions, which nothing less than all-conquering grace can subdue: I therefore implore Thine almighty aid. Do thou possess Thy throne in my heart, and cast out of it whatever opposeth or offendeth Thee. It is Thine already by purchase: O make it Thine also by conquest! and perform the whole work of a Saviour upon it.

After this manner doth the believer address himself to Christ; and thus doth he answer the call to come unto Him. From all which we may learn our duty in this matter. Let every laboring and heavy laden sinner, who hears me this day, speedily betake himself to the same happy course: plead his own call, and humbly claim His gracious protection; flee without delay to His atoning blood, and cleave to Him as the Lord your "righteousness and your strength." I shall afterward represent to you those sure grounds of hope which may encourage you to do this.

In the mean time let us consider the gracious promise with which our Lord enforces the invitation, "I will give you rest." This was the

Third thing I proposed to illustrate.

There can be no doubt that the rest here spoken of, must be, at least, of equal extent with the burden, and include a deliverance from every cause of trouble to the soul. But this subject is an ocean without bottom or shore; we can not measure the length or breadth of it, neither can its depth be fathomed; for "the riches of Christ are unsearchable;" and surely no tongue can express what the mind itself is unable to comprehend. Nevertheless I shall attempt to say a few things which may be of use to help forward your comfort and joy, till eternity shall unfold the whole to your view.

Doth the guilt of sin and the curse of the law lie heavy upon thy soul? "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world." In the sacrifice of Christ there is an infinite merit that can never be exhausted. He hath satisfied the most extensive demands of justice, and purchased a full and everlasting indemnity to every penitent believing sinner: so that "now there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." No sooner doth a soul come to Him in the manner I described, than it "passeth from death to life." He spreads His righteousness over it, and under that covering, presents it to His heavenly Father: from that happy moment it is no longer under the law, but under grace: "For Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, by His being made a curse for us." And what a plentiful source of consolation is this! Well may the sinner "be of good cheer," to whom Christ hath said, "Thy sins are forgiven thee."

Do you feel a law in your members warring against the law of your mind? Are you harassed with temptations, and so environed with "a body of death," that you are made to cry out, as Paul once did, "O wretched man, who shall deliver me!" Look up to that Prince and Saviour, whom God hath exalted, not only to give remission of sins, but likewise to bestow repentance upon His people, and grace to help them in every time of need. Christ hath obtained the Holy Spirit, by whose almighty aid the Christian can do all things. He will plant that immortal seed in your hearts, which shall gradually kill the weeds of corruption: so that, according to His faithful word of promise, though sin may lodge and fight within you, yet it shall not be able to get "dominion over you."

Do you fear that some unforeseen cause may provoke Him to forsake you, to withdraw His love and the communications of His grace? Know that "the gifts and callings of God are without repentance." Christ is the "good Shepherd, who carries the lambs in His bosom;" and therefore they can not perish, because none is strong enough to pluck them out of His hand. The believer is not left to stand by himself; He who is the author is likewise the finisher of His people's faith. Omnipotence is their guardian; and they are "kept," not by their own strength, but "by the power of God, through faith unto salvation."

These three are surely the heaviest burdens with which the soul of man can be oppressed; and you see that the Lord Jesus is able to remove them all. There are, no doubt, many other causes of discouragement to which we are liable, so long as we sojourn in this valley of tears; but as none of them are equal to those I have already named, we may certainly conclude that He who performs the greater work, can, with infinite ease, perform the lesser also. And, indeed, if I might stay upon this branch of the subject, it would be no difficult task to show that in all other respects believers "are complete in Christ," and may by faith derive from Him whatever is necessary either for their safety or comfort in this world: "For it hath pleased the Father, that in Him should all fullness dwell," as it is written.

But if we would behold the rest here spoken of in its utmost extent and highest perfection, we must look above us to that heavenly world, from which sin, and all the painful effects of it, are eternally excluded. "There remaineth a rest," said the apostle, "for the people of God." Great and manifold are their privileges even in this world; but beyond all these, are still more glorious and enriching blessings that await them in the next, which our "ears have not yet heard, neither can our hearts conceive." When we attempt to think of that exalted happiness, we can do little more than remove from it in our minds all those afflicting evils and grounds of discouragement which we may presently feel: only we must conclude, that whatever the particular ingredients are, the happiness itself must be, in all respects, worthy of its glorious Author, and proportioned to the infinite price that was paid for it. Our Lord Himself calls it a "kingdom," nay, a "kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world;" and the Apostle Peter hath recorded three of its distinguishing properties, where he styles it an "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

Such, my brethren, is that rest which Christ will finally bestow upon His people. They shall "enter into the joy of their Lord." All their burdens shall drop with their natural bodies; none of them can pass beyond the grave. Then faith and hope shall become sight and enjoyment; then love grown perfect shall cast out fear, and nothing shall remain of all their former trials, but the grateful remembrance of that friendly hand which supported them, and hath at length crowned their "light and momentary afflictions," with a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

And now, in the review of all that has been said, methinks every sinner who hears me should be ready to answer the call of my text in the language of Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go but unto Thee? for Thou hast the words of eternal life." O that there were such hearts in us! But perhaps some humble soul may say, Gladly would I go to this Saviour, willingly would I throw myself at His feet and implore His protection; but such, alas! is my vileness and unworthiness, so long have I slighted His offers and abused His grace, that I fear this call, kind as it is, doth not extend to me: my case is singularly bad, and my sins have been aggravated to such a degree that my desponding heart hath already pronounced the sentence of condemnation; and the doom appears so just, so righteous, that I can see no ground to hope that ever it shall be reversed. For removing this obstacle, which seems to lie in the way of your return to Christ, let me beg your attention to the following particulars.

Consider the great condescension of this Redeemer. While He was upon the earth, He never rejected any who sought relief from Him: like a sanctuary, whose gates stand continually open, He gave free undebarred access to all, insomuch that His enemies, by way of reproach, styled Him "the friend of publicans and sinners." Neither did our Lord disown the character: on the contrary, He gloried in it, and proclaimed it openly to the world; declaring, upon all proper occasions, that "He was come to seek, and to save that which was lost." For this end, He assumed our nature; for this end, He suffered and died; and upon the same benevolent design, He is now gone up to heaven, "where He appears in the presence of God for us;"—"that if any man sin, He may have an advocate with the Father," to solicit His pardon, and to plead His cause. And may not these discoveries of His merciful nature expel your fears, and revive your hope? Has He in a manner laid aside the majesty of a sovereign, and put on the mild and amiable aspect of a tender-hearted, sympathizing friend? and may not this by itself encourage you to draw near to Him, and to claim the blessings of that *rest* He hath obtained for His people?

But, lo! He hath prevented you even in this: for all the proofs of His good-will to men, He superadds the most warm and pressing invitations, to come to Him for relief from all their burdens. "In the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, If *any man* thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink." "Behold," said He to the degenerated church of the Laodiceans, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if *any man* will hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with Me." And in the concluding chapter of the Revelation, it is written, "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come: and let him that is a-thirst come: and *whosoever will*, let him come, and take the water of life freely." So that you see my text is not a singular instance of condescension; the Scriptures are replenished with invitations of the same kind; and they are all expressed in the most extensive and absolute terms, on purpose, as it were, to obviate every possible objection, and to remove all jealousy from the most desponding sinners, who might otherwise have suspected that the call did not reach so far as them.

But lest the offer of a Saviour, when viewed as a privilege, might still appear in the eyes of some a privilege too high for them to aspire to, therefore it hath pleased the Father to interpose His authority, and to make it our duty to embrace the offer: as we learn from that remarkable passage, "This is the *command* of God, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ." So that faith in Christ becomes an act of obedience; the law of the Supreme Governor is the sinner's warrant to come to the Saviour; and therefore it can be no presumption in any, however guilty they have been, to flee to this city of refuge, seeing He who hath appointed it, not only permits, but peremptorily *commands* them to repair to it.

And to crown all, our Lord Himself hath declared in the most solemn manner, that none shall be rejected who come to Him for salvation. These are His words: "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." I will receive him with outstretched arms; I will tenderly embrace and cherish him, and so unite him to Myself, that the combined force of earth and hell shall never be able to dissolve the union, or to separate His soul from My unchangeable love.

Lift up thy head, then, O "laboring and heavy laden" sinner! Ponder with due attention, those grounds of encouragement I have briefly suggested. Doth the Father *command* you to believe on His Son? Doth the Lord Jesus invite, nay, entreat you to come to Him, and at the same time assure you that "He will in no wise cast you out?" And shall not this multiplied security remove all your doubts, and bring you to Him with an humble, but steadfast, hope of obtaining that *rest* which He offers unto you? Say not henceforth, My burden is so heavy, and my guilt so great, that I dare not go to Him; but rather say, My burden is so heavy, that I *must* go to Him; for no other arm can remove it but His own. He offers you His help, because you are miserable; He invites you to come to Him, not because you deserve, but because you need His aid. Arise then, O, sinners! and obey His call: cast your burden upon Him who is mighty to save; yield yourselves, without reserve, to this faithful Redeemer, to be justified by His blood, and sanctified by His Spirit; "take His yoke upon you, and learn of Him;" and then you shall find *rest* to your soul.

But what shall I say to those who have never as yet felt the burden of sin? who, amid the deepest poverty and wretchedness, imagine themselves to be "rich, and increased with goods, and to stand in need of nothing?" Alas! my friends, what can we do for such? Shall I denounce the curses of a broken Covenant to alarm their fears? Shall I publish the terrors of the Lord and by these persuade them to flee from the wrath to come? Indeed, considerations of this kind seem proper and necessary, to rouse them from that deadly sleep into which they are cast. And believe it, O, sinners! that no representations of this sort, however awful they might appear, could exceed, or even equal, the dreadful reality; for who knoweth the "power of God's anger?"

But as my text breathes nothing but love and clemency, I shall rather, upon this occasion, "beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ," and fetch my arguments from the endearing condescensions of His mercy and grace.

Know, then, O, sinners! that, after all the contempt you have thrown upon Him, He is still willing to become your Saviour. Ungrateful as you have been, He once more opens His arms, and invites you to come unto Him. He sends us forth this day, to call after you in His name, and to intreat you in His stead to be reconciled to God. Behold, in the Gospel-offer, He lays, as it were, His crucified body in your way, to stop you in your self-destroying course. And will you still press onward, "and trample under-foot the Son of God?" Behold, His blood, like a mighty river, flows between you and the place of torment; and will you force your passage to the everlasting burning through this immense ocean of redeeming love? O, sinners, think of this! all who perish under the Gospel must carry this dreadful aggravation along with them: that mercy was in their offer, and they would not accept it; nay, that they insulted and abused the mercy that would have saved them. And "can your hearts endure, or can your hands be strong, in the day that God shall deal with you" for this contempt? For the Lord's sake, open your eyes in time; look upon Him whom you have pierced by your sins, and mourn. I address you as the angels did Lot, when they brought him forth from Sodom; "Escape for thy life, look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain:" Flee to the Saviour, "lest thou be consumed."

DISCOURSE SIXTIETH.

HUGH BLAIR, D.D.

This celebrated divine was born at Edinburg, in 1718, and educated in the University of that city. He was licensed to preach in 1741, when he became minister of Collossie, in Fife. In 1743 he was appointed minister of the Canongate, Edinburg; in 1754, he was removed to Lady Yester's, and in 1759, to the High Church, where he continued during the remainder of his life. Upon the formation of a professorship of Rhetoric and Belles-letters, in that city, Dr. Blair was appointed the professor, and here originated his celebrated "Lectures on Composition," first published in 1783. The first volume of his sermons appeared in 1777, and acquired a wide popularity. For publishing them he was rewarded with a pension of two hundred pounds per annum. Dr. Blair died in 1800.

The sermons of Blair are illustrative of a certain school of pulpit eloquence, wonderfully popular in his day, in which beauty and literary elegance were more cared for than the earnest grapple of the truth upon the mind and conscience. The remorseless criticism of John Foster, upon the sermons of this author, is well known. Nevertheless, though, as Foster says, they are free from the property of Pericles' eloquence, "which left stings behind," yet his sermons are by no means destitute of even high merit, as furnishing specimens of fine taste, neat and perspicuous style, concise statement, and beautiful simplicity. In these respects they are models of their kind. It should be added that though generally lacking in the clear enunciation of some of the great doctrines of revelation, many of his discourses are highly evangelical. This last remark applies to the one here given; which, by common consent, is allowed to be the best of his discourses. The title is ours.

THE HOUR AND THE EVENT OF ALL TIME.

"Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father! the hour is come."—John, xvii. 1.

These were the words of our blessed Lord on a memorable occasion. The feast of the Passover drew nigh, at which He knew that

He was to suffer. The night was arrived wherein He was to be delivered into the hands of His enemies. He had spent the evening in conference with His disciples, like a dying father in the midst of his family, mingling consolations with his last instructions. When He had ended His discourse to them, "He lifted up His eyes to heaven," and with the words which I have now read, began that solemn prayer of intercession for the Church, which closed His ministry. Immediately after, He went forth with His disciples into the garden of Gethsemane, and surrendered Himself to those who came to apprehend Him.

Such was the situation of our Lord at the time of His pronouncing these words. He saw His mission on the point of being accomplished. He had the prospect full before Him of all that He was about to suffer—"Father! the hour is come." What hour? An hour the most critical, the most pregnant with great events, since hours had begun to be numbered, since time had begun to run. It was the hour at which the Son of God was to terminate the labors of His important life by a death still more important and illustrious; the hour of atoning, by His sufferings, for the guilt of mankind; the hour of accomplishing prophecies, types, and symbols, which had been carried on through a series of ages; the hour of concluding the old, and of introducing into the world the new, dispensation of religion; the hour of His triumphing over the world, and death, and hell; the hour of His erecting that spiritual kingdom which is to last forever. Such is the hour. Such are the events which you are to commemorate in the sacrament of our Lord's Supper. I shall attempt to set them before you as proper subjects, at this time, of your devout meditation. To display them in their genuine majesty is beyond the ability of man.

I. This was the hour in which Christ was glorified by His sufferings. The whole of His life had discovered much real greatness under a mean appearance. Through the cloud of His humiliation, His native luster often broke forth; but never did it shine so bright as in this last, this trying hour. It was indeed the hour of distress and of blood. He knew it to be such; and when He uttered the words of the text, He had before His eyes the executioner and the cross, the scourge, the nails, and the spear. But by prospects of this nature His soul was not to be overcome. It is distress which ennobles every great character; and distress was to glorify the Son of God. He was now to teach all mankind by His example, how to suffer and to die. He was to stand forth before His enemies as the faithful witness of the truth, justifying by His behavior the character which He assumed, and sealing by His blood the doctrines which He taught.

What magnanimity in all His words and actions on this great occasion! The court of Herod, the judgment-hall of Pilate, the hill of Calvary, were so many theaters prepared for His displaying all the virtues of a constant and patient mind. When led forth to suffer, the first voice which we hear from Him is a generous lamentation over the fate of His unfortunate though guilty country; and to the last moment of His life we behold Him in possession of the same gentle and benevolent spirit. No upbraiding, no complaining expression escaped from His lips during the long and painful approaches of a cruel death. He betrayed no symptom of a weak or a vulgar, of a discomposed or impatient mind. With the utmost attention of filial tenderness He committed His aged mother to the care of His beloved disciple. With all the dignity of a sovereign He conferred pardon on a penitent fellow-sufferer. With a greatness of mind beyond example, He spent His last moments in apologies and prayers for those who were shedding His blood.

By wonders in heaven, and wonders on earth was this hour distinguished. All nature seemed to feel it; and the dead and the living bore witness of its importance. The vail of the temple was rent in twain. The earth shook. There was darkness over all the land. The graves were opened, and "many who slept arose, and went into the holy city." Nor were these the only prodigies of this awful hour. The most hardened hearts were subdued and changed. The judge who, in order to gratify the multitude, passed sentence against Him, publicly attested His innocence. The Roman centurion who presided at the execution, "glorified God," and acknowledged the Sufferer to be more than man. "After he saw the things which had passed, he said, Certainly this was a righteous person: truly this was the Son of God." The Jewish malefactor who was crucified with Him addressed Him as a King, and implored His favor. Even the crowd of insensible spectators, who had come forth as to a common spectacle, and who began with clamors and insults, "returned home smiting their breasts." Look back on the heroes, the philosophers, the legislators of old. View them in their last moments. Recall every circumstance which distinguished their departure from the world. Where can you find such an assemblage of high virtues, and of great events, as concurred at the death of Christ? Where so many testimonials given to the dignity of the dying person by earth and by heaven?

II. This was the hour in which Christ atoned for the sins of mankind, and accomplished our eternal redemption. It was the hour when that great sacrifice was offered up, the efficacy of which reaches back to the first transgression of man, and extends forward to the end of time; the hour when, from the cross, as from an high altar, the blood was flowing which washed away the guilt of the nations.

This awful dispensation of the Almighty contains mysteries which are beyond the discovery of man. It is one of those things into which "the angels desire to look." What has been revealed to us is, that the death of Christ was the interposition of Heaven for preventing the ruin of human kind. We know that under the government of God, misery is the natural consequence of guilt. After rational creatures had, by their criminal conduct, introduced disorder into the Divine kingdom, there was no ground to believe that by their penitence and prayers alone they could prevent the destruction which threatened them. The prevalence of propitiatory sacrifices throughout the earth, proclaims it to be the general sense of mankind, that mere repentance was not of sufficient avail to expiate sin or to stop its penal effects. By the constant allusions which are carried on in the New Testament to the sacrifices under the law, as pre-signifying a great atonement made by Christ, and by the strong expressions which are used in describing the effects of His death, the sacred writers show, as plainly as language allows, that there was an efficacy in His sufferings far beyond that of mere example and instruction. The nature and extent of that efficacy we are unable as yet, fully to trace. Part we are capable of beholding; and the wisdom of what we behold we have reason to adore. We discern, in this plan of redemption, the evil of sin strongly exhibited, and the justice of the Divine government awfully exemplied, in Christ suffering for sinners. But let us not imagine that our present discoveries unfold the whole influence of the death of Christ. It is connected with causes into which we can not penetrate. It produces consequences too extensive for us to explore. "God's thoughts are not as our thoughts." In all things we "see only in part;" and here, if any where, we see also "as through a glass, darkly."

This, however, is fully manifest, that redemption is one of the most glorious works of the Almighty. If the hour of the creation of the world was great and illustrious; that hour, when, from the dark and formless mass, this fair system of nature arose at the Divine command; when "The morning-stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy;" no less illustrious is the hour of the restoration of the world; the hour when, from condemnation and misery, it emerged into happiness and peace. With less external majesty it was attended; but it is, on that account, the more wonderful, that, under an appearance so simple, such great events were covered.

III. In this hour the long series of prophecies, visions, types, and figures were accomplished. This was the center in which they all met: this the point toward which they had tended and verged, throughout the course of so many generations. You behold the Law and the Prophets standing, if we may speak so, at the foot of the cross, and doing homage. You behold Moses and Aaron bearing the ark of the covenant; David and Elijah presenting the oracle of testimony. You behold all the priests and sacrifices, all the rites and ordinances, all the types and symbols assembled together to receive their consummation. Without the death of Christ, the worship and ceremonies of the law would have remained a pompous, but unmeaning, institution. In the hour when He was crucified, "the book with the seven seals" was opened. Every rite assumed its significancy; every prediction met its event; every symbol displayed its correspondence.

The dark and seemingly ambiguous method of conveying important discoveries under figures and emblems, was not peculiar to the sacred books. The spirit of God in pre-signifying the death of Christ, adopted that plan, according to which the whole knowledge of those early ages was propagated through the world. Under the vail of mysterious allusion, all wisdom was then concealed. From the sensible world, images were every where borrowed, to describe things unseen. More was understood to be meant than was openly expressed. By enigmatical rites, the priest communicated his doctrines; by parables and allegories, the philosopher instructed his disciples; even the legislator, by figurative sayings, commanded the reverence of the people. Agreeably to this prevailing mode of instruction, the whole dispensation of the Old Testament was so conducted, as to be the shadow and figure of a spiritual system. Every remarkable event, every distinguished personage, under the law, is interpreted in the New Testament, as bearing reference to the hour of which we treat. If Isaac was laid upon the altar as an innocent victim; if David was driven from his throne by the wicked, and restored by the hand of God; if the brazen serpent was lifted up to heal the people; if the rock was smitten by Moses, to furnish drink in the wilderness; all were types of Christ and alluded to His death.

In predicting the same event the language of ancient prophecy was magnificent, but seemingly contradictory: for it foretold a Messiah, who was to be at once a sufferer and a conqueror. *The Star was to come out of Jacob, and the Branch to spring from the stem of Jesse. The Angel of the Covenant, the desire of all nations, was to come suddenly to His temple;* and to Him was to be "the gathering of the people." Yet, at the same time, He was to be "despised and rejected of men;" he was to be "taken from prison and from judgment," and to be "led as a lamb to the slaughter." Though He was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," yet "the Gentiles were to come to His light, and kings to the brightness of His rising." In the hour when Christ died, those prophetical riddles were solved: those seeming contradictions were reconciled. The obscurity of oracles, and the ambiguity of types, vanished. The "sun of righteousness" rose; and, together with the dawn of religion, those shadows passed away.

IV. This was the hour of the abolition of the law, and the introduction of the Gospel; the hour of terminating the old and of beginning the new dispensation of religious knowledge and worship throughout the earth. Viewed in this light, it forms the most august era which is to be found in the history of mankind. When Christ was suffering on the cross, we are informed by one of the evangelists, that He said, "I thirst;" and that they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it to His mouth. "After He had tasted the vinegar, knowing that all things were now accomplished, and the Scriptures fulfilled, he said, It is finished;" that is, this offered draught of vinegar was the last circumstance predicted by an ancient prophet, that remained to be fulfilled. The vision and the prophecy are now sealed: the Mosaic dispensation is closed. "And He bowed His head and gave up the ghost."

"It is finished." When He uttered these words He changed the state of the universe. At that moment the law ceased, and the Gospel commenced. This was the ever-memorable point of time which separated the old and the new worlds from each other. On one side of the point of separation, you behold the law, with its priests, its sacrifices, and its rites, retiring from sight. On the other side, you behold the Gospel, with its simple and venerable institutions, coming forward into view. Significantly was the vail of the temple rent in this hour; for the glory then departed from between the cherubim. The legal high priest delivered up his Urim and Thummim, his breast-plate, his robes, and his incense: and CHRIST stood forth as the great High Priest of all succeeding generations. By that one sacrifice which He now offered, He abolished sacrifices forever.

Altars on which the fire had blazed for ages, were now to smoke no more. Victims were no more to bleed. "Not with the blood of bulls and goats, but with His own blood He now entered into the holy place, there to appear in the presence of God for us."

This was the hour of association and union to all the worshipers of God. When Christ said, "It is finished," He threw down the wall of partition which had so long divided the Gentile from the Jew. He gathered into one, all the faithful out of every kindred and people. He proclaimed the hour to be come when the knowledge of the true God should be no longer confined to one nation, nor His worship to one temple; but over all the earth, the worshipers of the Father should "serve Him in spirit and in truth." From that hour they who dwelt in the "uttermost ends of the earth, strangers to the Covenant of promise," began to be "brought nigh." In that hour the light of the Gospel dawned from afar on the British Islands.

During a long course of ages, Providence seemed to be occupied in preparing the world for this revolution. The whole Jewish economy was intended to usher it in. The knowledge of God was preserved unextinguished in one corner of the world, that thence, in due time, might issue forth the light which was to overspread the earth. Successive revelations gradually enlarged the views of men beyond the narrow bounds of Judea, to a more extensive kingdom of God. Signs and miracles awakened their expectation, and directed their eyes toward this great event. Whether God descended on the flaming mountain, or spoke by the Prophet's voice; whether He scattered His chosen people into captivity, or re-assembled them in their own land; He was still carryin on a progressive plan, which was accomplished at the death of Christ.

Not only in the territories of Israel, but over all the earth, the great dispensations of Providence respected the approach of this important hour. If empires rose or fell; if war divided, or peace united, the nations; if learning civilized their manners, or philosophy enlarged their views; all was, by the secret decree of Heaven, made to ripen the world for that "fullness of time," when Christ was to publish the whole counsel of God. The Persian, the Macedonian, the Roman conqueror, entered upon the stage each at his predicted period; and "though He meant not so, neither did His heart think so," ministered to this hour. The revolutions of power, and the succession of monarchies, were so arranged by Providence, as to facilitate the progress of the Gospel through the habitable world, after the day had arrived, "when the stone which was cut out of the mountain without hands, should become a great mountain and fill the earth." This was the day which "Abraham saw afar off, and was glad." This was the day which "many prophets, and kings, and righteous men, desired to see, but could not;" the day for which "the earnest expectation of the creature," long oppressed with ignorance, and bewildered in superstition, might be justly said to *wait.*

V. This was the hour of Christ's triumph over all the powers of darkness; the hour in which He overthrew dominions and thrones, "led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." The contest which the kingdom of darkness had long maintained against the kingdom of light was now brought to its crisis. The period was come when "the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent." For many ages, the most gross superstition had filled the earth. "The glory of the incorruptible God" was every where, except in the land of Judea, "changed into images made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and beasts, and creeping things." The world, which the Almighty created for Himself, seemed to have become a temple of idols. Even to vices and passions altars were raised; and what was entitled Religion, was in effect a discipline of impurity. In the midst of this universal darkness, Satan had erected his throne and the learned and the polished, as well as the savage nations, bowed down before him. But at the hour when Christ appeared on the cross, the signal of his defeat was given. His kingdom suddenly departed from him: the reign of idolatry passed away: He was "beheld to fall like lightning from heaven." In that hour the foundation of every Pagan temple shook. The statue of every false god tottered on its base. The priest fled from his falling shrine; and the heathen oracles became dumb forever.

As on the cross, Christ triumphed over Satan, so He overcame his auxiliary, the world. Long had it assailed Him with its temptations and discouragements; in this hour of severe trial, He surmounted them all. Formerly He had despised the pleasures of the world. He now baffled its terrors. Hence He is justly said to have "crucified the world." By His sufferings He ennobled distress; and He darkened the luster of the pomp and vanities of life. He discovered to His followers the path which leads, through affliction, to glory and to victory; and He imparted to them the same spirit which enabled Him to overcome. "My kingdom is not of this world. In this world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Death also, the last foe of man, was the victim of this hour. The formidable appearance of the specter remained; but his dart was taken away. For, in the hour when Christ expiated guilt, He disarmed death, by securing the resurrection of the just. When He said to His penitent fellow-sufferer, "To-day thou shalt be with Me in paradise," He announced to all His followers the certainty of heavenly bliss. He declared *the cherubim* to be dismissed, and the *flaming sword* to be sheathed, which had been appointed at the fall, "to keep from man the way of the tree of life." Faint, before this period, had been the hope, indisstinct the prospect, which even good men enjoyed of the heavenly kingdom. "Life and immortality were now brought to light." From the hill of Calvary the first clear and certain view was given to the world of the everlasting mansions. Since that hour, they have been the perpetual consolation of believers in Christ. Under trouble, they soothe their minds; amid temptation, they support their virtue; and in their dying moments enable them to say, "O, death! where is thy sting? O, grave! where is thy victory?"

VI. This was the hour when our Lord erected that spiritual kingdom which is never to end. How vain are the counsels and designs of men! How shallow is the policy of the wicked! How short their triumphing! The enemies of Christ imagined that in this hour they had successfully accomplished their plan for His destruction. They believed that they had entirely scattered the small party of His followers, and had extinguished His name and His honor forever. In derision they addressed Him as a king. They clothed Him with purple robes; they crowned Him with a crown of thorns; they put a reed into His hand; and, with insulting mockery, bowed the knee before Him. Blind and impious men! How little did they know that the Almighty was, at that moment "setting Him as a king on the hill of Sion; giving Him the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession!" How little did they know that their badges of mock royalty were at that moment converted into the signals of absolute dominion, and the instruments of irresistible power! The reed which they put into His hands became "a rod of iron," with which He was to "break in pieces His enemies;" a scepter with which He was to rule the universe in righteousness. The cross, which they thought was to stigmatize Him with infamy, became the ensign of His renown. Instead of being the reproach of His followers, it was to be their boast and their glory. The cross was to shine on palaces and churches, throughout the earth. It was to be assumed as the distinction of the most powerful monarchs, and to wave in the banner of victorious armies when the memory of Herod and Pilate should be accursed; when Jerusalem should be reduced to ashes, and the Jews be vagabonds over all the world.

These were the triumphs which commenced at this hour. Our Lord saw them already in their birth; "He saw of the travail of His soul, and was satisfied." He beheld the word of God going forth, conquering, and to conquer; subduing, to the obedience of His laws, the subduers of the world; carrying light into the regions of darkness, and mildness into the habitations of cruelty. He beheld the Gentiles waiting below the cross, to receive the Gospel. He beheld Ethiopia and the Isles stretching out their hands to God; the desert beginning to rejoice and to blossom as the rose; and the knowledge of the Lord filling the earth, as the waters cover the sea. Well pleased, He said, "It is finished." As a conqueror, He retired from the field, reviewing His triumphs: "He bowed His head and gave up the ghost." From that hour, Christ was no longer a mortal man, but "Head over all things to the Church;" the glorious King of men and angels, of whose dominion there shall be no end. His triumphs shall perpetually increase. "His name shall endure forever; it shall last as long as the sun; men shall be blest in Him, and all nations shall call Him blessed."

Such were the transactions, such the effects, of this ever-memorable hour. With all those great events was the mind of our Lord filled, when He lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, "Father! the hour is come."

From this view which we have taken of this subject, permit me to suggest, what ground it affords to confide in the mercy of God for the pardon of sin; to trust to His faithfulness, for the accomplishment of all His promises; and to approach to Him, with gratitude and devotion, in acts of worship.

In the first place, the death of Christ affords us ground to confide in the Divine mercy for the pardon of sin. All the steps of that high dispensation of Providence, which we have considered, lead directly to this conclusion, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" This is the final result of the discoveries of the Gospel. On this rests the great system of consolation, which it hath reared up for men. We are not left to dubious and intricate reasonings, concerning the conduct which God may be expected to hold toward His offending creatures: but we are led to the view of important and illustrious facts which strike the mind with evidence irresistible. For is it possible to believe, that such great operations, as I have endeavored to describe, were carried on by the Almighty in vain? Did He excite in the hearts of His creatures such encouraging hopes, without any intention to fulfill them? After so long a preparation of goodness, could He mean to deny forgiveness to the penitent and the humble? When they come by the sense of guilt, man looks up with an astonished eye to the justice of his Creator, let him recollect that hour of which the text speaks, and be comforted. The signals of Divine mercy, erected in his view, are too conspicuous to be either distrusted or mistaken.

In the next place, the discoveries of this hour afford the highest reason to trust in the Divine faithfulness for the accomplishment of every promise which remains yet unfulfilled. For this was the hour of the completion of God's ancient covenant.

It was the "performance of the mercy promised to the fathers." We behold the consummation of a great plan, which, throughout a course of ages, had been uniformly pursued; and which, against every human appearance, was, at the appointed moment, exactly fulfilled. "No word that is gone out of the mouth of the Lord shall fail." No length of time alters His purpose. No obstacles can retard it. Toward the ends accomplished in this hour, the most repugnant instruments were made to operate. We discern God bending to His purpose the jarring passions, the opposite interests, and even the vices of men; uniting seeming contrarieties in His scheme; making "the wrath of man to praise Him;" obliging the ambition of princes, the prejudices of the Jews, the malice of Satan, all to concur, either in bringing forward this hour, or in completing its destined effects. With what entire confidence ought we to wait for the fulfillment of all His other promises in their due time; even when events are most embroiled, and the prospect is most discouraging: "Although thou sayest, thou canst not see Him, yet judgment is before Him; therefore trust thou in Him." Be attentive only to perform thy duty; leave the event to God, and be assured, that under the direction of His Providence, "all things shall work together" for a happy issue.

Lastly, the consideration of this whole subject tends to excite gratitude and devotion, when we approach to God in acts of worship. The hour of which I have discussed, presents Him to us in the amiable light of the Deliverer of mankind, the Restorer of our forfeited hopes. We behold the greatness of the Almighty, softened by the mild radiance of condescension and mercy. We behold Him diminishing the awful distance at which we stand from His presence, by appointing for us a Mediator and Intercessor, through whom the humble may, without dismay, approach to Him who made them. By such views of the Divine nature, Christian faith lays the foundation for a worship which shall be at once rational and affectionate; a worship in which the light of the understanding shall concur with the devotion of the heart, and the most profound reverence be united with the most cordial love. Christian faith is not a system of speculative truths. It is not a lesson of moral instruction only. By a train of high discoveries which it reveals, by a succession of interesting objects which it places in our view, it is calculated to elevate the mind, to purify the affections, and by the assistance of devotion, to confirm and encourage virtue. Such, in particular, is the scope of that Divine institution, the Sacrament of our Lord's Supper. To this happy purpose let it conduce, by concentering in one striking point of light all that the Gospel has displayed of what is most important to man. Touched with just contrition for past offenses, and filled with a grateful sense of Divine goodness, let us come to the altar of God, and, with a humble faith in His infinite mercies, devote ourselves to His service forever.

DISCOURSE SIXTY-FIRST.

JOHN LOGAN, F.R.S.

Logan was born in 1748, at Fulla, in the county of Mid-Lothian, of parents who belonged to the Burgher Seceders, and was educated at the parochial school and the University of Edinburg. Having completed his theological studies, he soon became celebrated for his eloquence, and was called to become one of the ministers of South Leith Church and parish. He was desirous of high literary success, and its honors and emoluments, in which he was somewhat disappointed, and possessing a sensitive nature, melancholy came over his spirits, dissatisfaction arose among his parishioners, and he at length resigned the ministry, and devoted his remaining days to literary pursuits. In the bloom of his years, health declined, and he closed his life December 25th, 1788.

Logan was a man of elegant taste and fervid genius, and published at different times, poems of a lyric, dramatic, and elegiac character. Of his sermons, some forty in number, and recently published in this country, Dr. Wheddon remarks, "If mastery in any department is to be learned from the masters, to few masters of pulpit style in our language, can our ministry resort superior to Logan. In the richness and range of his language, in the graceful swell of his ever-varying periods, in the animated expansion of his climactic paragraphs, he satisfies the fancy, while in the chasteness and manliness of his style, in the purity of his diction, and the burnish of his texture, he may challenge the severest taste, and assert himself a place among the English classics." The following is certainly a production of high order in point of literary excellence.

THE CHRISTIAN'S VICTORY OVER DEATH.

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."—1 Cor. xv. 55, 57.

The Messiah is foretold in ancient prophecy, as a magnificent Conqueror. His victories were celebrated, and His triumphs were sung, long before the time of His appearance to Israel. "Who is this," saith the prophet Isaiah, pointing Him out to the Old Testament Church, "Who is this that cometh from Edom; with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength?" "I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. I shall give Him the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession." As a Conqueror, He had to destroy the works of the great enemy of mankind; and to overcome death, the king of terrors.

The method of accomplishing this victory, was as surprising as the love which gave it birth. "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise took part of the same, that through His own death, He might destroy Him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Accordingly, His passion on the cross, which you have this day commemorated, was the very victory which He obtained. The hour in which He suffered, was also the hour in which He overcame. Then He bruised the head of the old serpent, who had seduced our first parents to rebel against their Maker; then He disarmed the king of terrors, who had usurped dominion over the nations; then triumphing over the legions of hell, and the powers of darkness, He made a show of them openly. Not for Himself, but for us did He conquer. The Captain of our salvation fought, that we might overcome. He obtained the victory, that we may join in the triumphal song, as we now do, when we repeat these words of the apostle: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

It is the glory of the Christian religion, that it abounds with consolations under all the evils of life; nor is its benign influence confined to the course of life, but even extends to death itself. It delivers us from the agony of the last hour; sets us free from the fears which then perplex the timid; from the horrors which haunt the offender, though penitent, and from all the darkness which involves our mortal state. So complete is the victory we obtain, that Jesus Christ is said in Scripture to have *abolished* death.

The evils in death, from which Jesus Christ sets us free, are the following: in the *first* place, The doubts and fears that are apt to perplex the mind, from the uncertainty in which a future state is involved. *Secondly.* The apprehensions of wrath and forebodings of punishments, proceeding from the consciousness of sin. *Thirdly.* The fears that arise in the mind upon the awful transition from this world to the next.

In the *first* place, Jesus Christ gives us victory over death, by delivering us from the doubts and fears which arose in the minds of those who knew not the Gospel, from the uncertainty in which a future state was involved.

Without Divine Revelation, men wandered in the dark with respect to an after life. Unassisted reason could give but imperfect information on this important article. Conjectures, in place of discoveries, presumptions, in place of demonstrations, were all that it could offer to the inquiring mind. The unenlightened eye could not clearly pierce the cloud which vailed futurity from mortal view. The light of nature reached little further than the limits of this globe, and shed but a feeble ray upon the region beyond the grave. Hence, those heathen nations, of whom the apostle speaks, are described as *sorrowing* and *having no hope.* And whence could reason derive complete information, that there was a state of immortality beyond the grave? Consult with appearances in nature, and you find but few intimations of a future life. Destruction seems to be one of the great laws of the system. The various forms of life are indeed preserved; but while the species remains, the individual perishes. Every thing that you behold around you bears the marks of mortality and the symptoms of decay. He only who is, and was, and is to come, is without any variableness or shadow of turning. Every thing passes away. A great and mighty river, for ages and centuries, has been rolling on, and sweeping away all that ever lived, to the vast abyss of eternity. On that darkness light does not rise. From that unknown country none return. On that devouring deep, which has swallowed up every thing, no vestige appears of the things that were.

There are particular appearances also which might naturally excite an alarm for the future. The human machine is so constituted, that soul and body seem often to decay together. To the eye of sense, as the beast dies, so dies the man. Death seems to close the scene, and the grave to put a final period to the prospects of man. The words of Job beautifully express the anxiety of the mind on the subject. "If a man die, shall he live again? There is hope of a tree if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; yet, through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant: but man dieth, and is cut off; man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea; as the flood decayeth and drieth up; so man lieth down, and riseth not; till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep." But what a dreadful prospect does annihilation present to the mind! To be an outcast from existence; to be blotted out from the book of life; to mingle with the dust, and be scattered over the earth, as if the breath of life had never animated our frame! Man can not support the thought. Is the light which shone brighter than all the stars of heaven set in darkness, to rise no more? Are all the hopes of man come to this, to be taken into the councils of the Almighty; to be admitted to behold part of that plan of Providence which governs the world, and when his eyes are just opened to read the book, to be shut forever? If such were to be our state, we would be of all creatures the most miserable. The world appears a chaos without form, and void of order. From the throne of nature, God departs, and there appears a cruel and capricious being, who delights in death, and makes sport of human misery.

From this state of doubts and fears, we are delivered by the Gospel of Jesus. The message which He brought, was life and immortality. From the Star of Jacob, light shone even upon the shades of death. As a proof of immortality, He called back the departed spirit from the world unknown; as an earnest of the resurrection to a future life, He Himself arose from the dead. When we contemplate the tomb of nature, we cry out, "Can these dry bones live?" When we contemplate the tomb of Jesus, we say, "Yes, they can live!" As He arose, we shall in like manner arise. In the tomb of nature, you see man return to the dust from whence he was taken; in the tomb of Jesus you see man restored to life again. In the tomb of nature you see the shades of death fall on the weary traveler, and the darkness of the long night close over his head; in the tomb of Jesus, you see light arise upon the shades of death, and the morning dawn upon the long night of the grave. On the tomb of nature, it is written, "Behold thy end, O man! Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return. Thou, who now callest thyself the son of heaven, shall become one of the clods of the valley;" on the tomb of Christ is written, "Thou diest, O man, but to live again. When dust returns to dust, the spirit shall return to God who gave it. I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." From the tomb of nature, you hear a voice, "Forever silent is the land of forgetfulness! From the slumbers of the grave shall we awake no more! Like the flowers of the field, shall we be as though we had never been!" from the tomb of Jesus, you hear, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, thus saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labors, and pass into glory. In my Father's house, there are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go away, I will come again, and take you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."

Will not this assurance of a happy immortality and a blessed resurrection, in a great measure remove the terror and the sting of death? May we not walk without dismay through the dark valley, when we are conducted by a beam from heaven? May we not endure the tossings of one stormy night, when it carries us to the shore that we long for? What cause have we to dread the messenger who brings us to our Father's house? Should not our fears about futurity abate, when we hear God addressing us with respect to death, as He did the patriarch of old, upon going to Egypt, "Fear not to go down to the grave; I will go down with thee, and will bring thee up again?"

Secondly, Our victory over death consists in our being delivered from the apprehensions of wrath and forebodings of punishment, which arise in the mind from the consciousness of sin.

That there is a God who governs the world, the patron of righteousness and the avenger of sin, is so manifest from the light of nature, that the belief of it has obtained among all nations. That it shall be well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked; that God will reward those who will diligently seek Him, and punish those who transgress His laws, is the principle upon which all religion is founded. But whether mercy be an attribute in the Divine nature to such an extent that God may be rendered propitious to those who rebel against His authority and disobey His commandments, is an inquiry to which no satisfactory answer can be made. Many of the Divine attributes are conspicuous from the works of creation; the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of God, appear in creating the world; in superintending that world which He has made; in diffusing life wide over the system of things, and providing the means of happiness to all His creatures. But from no appearances in nature does it clearly follow, that the exercise of mercy to offenders is part of the plan by which the universe is governed. For any thing that we know from the light of nature, repentance alone may not be sufficient to procure the remission of sins; the tears of contrition may be unavailable to wash away the stains of a guilty life, and the Divine favor may be implored in vain by those who have become obnoxious to the Divine displeasure. If in the calm and serene hour of inquiry, man could find no consolation in such thoughts, how would he be overwhelmed with horror, when his mind was disordered with a sense of guilt? When remembrance brought his former life to view, when reflection pierced him to the heart, darkness would spread itself over his mind, Deity would appear an object of terror, and the spirit, wounded by remorse, would discern nothing but an offended Judge armed with thunders to punish the guilty. If, in the day of health and prosperity, these reflections were so powerful to embitter life, they would be a source of agony and despair when the last hour approached. When life flows according to our wishes, we may endeavor to conceal our sins, and shut our ears against the voice of conscience. But these artifices will avail little at the hour of death. Then things appear in their true colors. Then conscience tells the truth, and the mask is taken off from the man, when our sins at that hour pass before us in review. Guilty and polluted as we are, covered with confusion, how shall we appear at the judgment-seat of God, and answer at the bar of eternal justice? How shall dust and ashes stand in the presence of that uncreated glory, before which principalities and powers bow down, tremble, and adore? How shall guilty and self-condemned creatures appear before Him, in whose sight the heavens are not clean, and who chargeth His angels with folly? This is the sting of death. It is guilt that sharpens the spear of the King of Terrors. But even in this view we have victory over death, through Jesus Christ our Lord. By His death upon the Cross, an atonement was made for the sins of men. The wrath of God was averted from the world. A great plan of reconciliation is now unfolded in the Gospel. Under the banner of the cross, pardon is proclaimed to returning penitents. They who accept the offers of mercy, and who fly for refuge to the hope set before them, are taken into favor; their sins are forgiven, and their names are written in the book of life. Over them death has no power. The king of terrors is transformed into an angel of peace, to waft them to their native country, where they long to be.

This, O Christian! the death of thy Redeemer, is thy strong consolation; thy effectual remedy against the fear of death. What evil can come nigh to him for whom Jesus died? Does the law which thou hast broken, denounce vengeance against thee? Behold that law fulfilled in the meritorious life of thy Redeemer. Does the sentence of wrath pronounced against the posterity of Adam sound in thine ears? Behold that sentence blotted out, that *handwriting*, as the apostle calls it, cancelled, nailed to thy Saviour's cross, and left there as a trophy of His victory. Art thou afraid that the cry of thy offenses may rise to heaven, and reach the ears of justice? There is no place for it there; in room of it ascends the voice of that blood which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel. Does the enemy of mankind accuse thee at the judgment-seat? He is put to silence by thy Advocate and Intercessor at the right hand of thy Father. Does death appear to thee in a form of terror, and hold out his sting to alarm thy mind? His terror is removed, and his sting was pulled out by that hand, which, on Mount Calvary, was fixed to the accursed tree. Art thou afraid that the arrows of Divine wrath which smite the guilty, may be aimed at thy head? Before they can touch thee, they must pierce that body, which, in the symbols of Divine institution, was this day held forth crucified among you, and which at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, is forever presented in behalf of the redeemed. Well then may ye join in the triumphant song of the apostle, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

In the *third* place, Jesus Christ gives us victory over death, by yielding us consolation and relief under the fears that arise in the mind upon the awful transition from this world to the next.

Who ever left the precincts of mortality without casting a wishful look on what he left behind, and a trembling eye on the scene that is before him? Being formed by our Creator for enjoyments even in this life, we are endowed with a sensibility to the objects around us. We have affections, and we delight to indulge them: we have hearts, and we want to bestow them. Bad as the world is, we find in it objects of affection and attachment. Even in this waste and howling wilderness, there are spots of verdure and of beauty, of power to charm the mind and make us cry out, "It is good for us to be here." When, after the observation and experience of years, we have found out the objects of the soul, and met with minds congenial to our own, what pangs must it give to the heart to think of parting forever? We even contract an attachment to inanimate objects. The tree under whose shadow we have often sat; the fields where we have frequently strayed; the hill, the scene of contemplation, or the haunt of friendship, become objects of passion to the mind, and upon our leaving them, excite a temporary sorrow and regret. If these things can affect us with uneasiness, how great must be the affliction, when stretched on that bed from which we shall rise no more, and looking about for the last time on the sad circle of our weeping friends! How great must be the affliction, to dissolve at once all the attachments of life; to bid an eternal adieu to the friends whom we long have loved, and to part forever with all that is dear below the sun! But let not the Christian be disconsolate. He parts with the objects of his affection, to meet them again; to meet them in a better world, where change never enters, and from whose blissful mansions sorrow flies away. At the resurrection of the just; in the great assembly of the sons of God, when all the family of heaven are gathered together, not one person shall be missing that was worthy of thy affection or esteem. And if among imperfect creatures, and in a troubled world, the kind, the tender, and the generous affections have such power to charm the heart, that even the tears which they occasion delight us, what joy unspeakable and glorious will they produce, when they exist in perfect minds, and are improved by the purity of the heavens!

Christianity also gives us consolation in the transition from this world to the next. Every change in life awakens anxiety; whatever is unknown, is the object of fear; no wonder then that it is awful and alarming to nature, to think of that time when the hour of our departure is at hand; when this animal frame shall be dissolved, and the mysterious bond between soul and body shall be broken. Even the visible effects of mortality are not without terror; to have no more a name among the living; to pass into the dominions of the dead; to have the worm for a companion, and a sister, are events at which nature shudders and starts back. But more awful still is the invisible scene, when the curtain between both worlds shall be drawn back, and the soul naked and disembodied appear in the presence of its Creator. Even under these thoughts, the comforts of Christianity may delight thy soul. Jesus, thy Saviour, has the keys of death; the abodes of the dead are part of His kingdom. He lay in the grave, and hallowed it for the repose of the just. Before our Lord ascended up on high, He said to His disciples, "I go to My Father and to your Father, to My God and to your God;" and when the time of your departure is at hand, you go to your Father and His Father, to your God and His God.

Enlightened by these discoveries, trusting to the merits of his Redeemer, and animated with the hope which is set before him, the Christian will depart with tranquillity and joy. To him the bed of death will not be a scene of terror, nor the last hour an hour of despair. There is a majesty in the death of the Christian. He partakes of the spirit of that world to which he is advancing, and he meets his latter end with a face that looks to the heavens.

DISCOURSE SIXTY-SECOND.

THOMAS M'CRIE, D.D.

There are few individuals to whose honorable exertions, especially in his beloved country, the cause of religion and of literature is more indebted than to Dr. M'Crie. Born at Dunse, in Berwickshire, November, 1772, educated in a thorough manner at the University of Edinburg, and at Divinity Hall, he was licensed to preach September 9th, 1795, and in the year following was ordained over the church of Potterrow, Edinburg. His excellent Life of John Knox, published in 1811, caused him to be widely and honorably known; a reputation increased by several other publications. During the years 1817 and 1818, in addition to other duties, he acted as Theological Professor to the religious society with which he was connected, the labors of which he resumed in 1834. He was preparing a life of Calvin, when, in the year 1835, August 4th, his valuable labors were arrested by an attack of apoplexy. He died on the following day, in his sixty-third year.

Whether estimated by his piety, his talents, or his learning, Dr. M'Crie was one of the brightest ornaments of the Scottish Secession Church. The publications which he has left to the world are numerous, and of great value. His life of Knox is alone a sufficient monument to his genius and Christian worth. A volume of his "Sermons, Lectures, etc.," was published several years ago, which ought to be given to the American public. No one can peruse the following admirable sermon without coveting the privilege of possessing more of the productions of the same eloquent pen. The very great length of the discourse renders it necessary to omit a few less important paragraphs, chiefly introductory and narrative in their character.

THE PRAYER OF THE THIEF ON THE CROSS.

"Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom."—Luke, xxiii. 42.

Who can tell what these words convey? None but He to whom they were addressed; who saw into the bottom of the speaker's heart, approved of his confession, and answered his petition exceedingly above what he could ask or think; when He replied, "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise?" It was not a time, my brethren, for many words: but oh, how much is expressed by these two short sentences, spoken from such hearts, and in such circumstances! What a colloquy was this! what a communion! what a respite from torture! what a foretaste of Paradise! what a feast on a cross between earth and heaven! There was no opportunity for salutation or embracing, or the exchanging of the symbolical cup. But what an exchange of tender looks! What a conjunction of hearts! what an intimate friendship on so short an acquaintance! what a joyful farewell before so awful a parting!

Think you, my brethren, that either of the twain felt at this moment the nails with which they were transfixed to the tree? The soul of the penitent thief was filled with a joy unutterable, which must have swallowed up all sense of pain. He rejoiced in the death by which he now glorified God. He gloried on the cross, and "in the cross." True, he was crucified; but then he was "crucified with Christ," and that in another sense than his unhappy companion was, or than any of the spectators of the scene knew or apprehended. This was to him matter of ineffable gloriation. "Blessed day on which I was overtaken and seized by the pursuviants of justice! Blessed sentence which brought me into the company and acquaintance of the Saviour of sinners, of the chief of sinners, and advanced me to the high, the distinguished honor of suffering along with Him." At that moment, too, Jesus rejoiced in spirit. He saw of the travail of his soul, and was satisfied. He felt that He was a conqueror. He had already begun to divide the spoil ravished from principalities and powers, which He made a show of openly triumphing over them on this cross. In the conquest which He had just achieved, He beheld an earnest of His subsequent triumphs over the god of this world, and, exhilarated with the prospect, He "endured the cross, despising the shame."

The address of the believing, penitent malefactor, was, at the same time, a prayer, a confession of faith, and a sermon. But no such prayer had been offered up since "men began to call on the name of the Lord;" no such confession of faith was ever made by council or assembly of divines; no such sermon was ever delivered by the most powerful and eloquent preacher. And then the Saviour's reply! Many a compassionate, benignant, and seasonable answer had He vouchsafed to those who invoked Him, and who professed their faith in Him, but none of them equaled this. Pleased with the confession of Nathanael, He said to him, "Thou shalt see the heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." To Peter He had said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but My Father who is in heaven." To the Syrophenician, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." To the Roman centurion, "I have not found such faith: no, not in Israel." And to His disciples, "Henceforth I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until I drink it new with you in the kingdom of God." But to none of these did He say as unto this poor, converted, crucified thief, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

He had made many converts during His personal ministry, when He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. But of this man He had made a convert on the cross, in the midst of great agony of body and soul, and therefore He rejoiced in him above all His followers. He was His Benoni, the son of His sorrow, and therefore He made him His Benjamin, the son of His right hand.

But let us examine more coolly and attentively this singular address of the convict on the cross. Let us consider, in the first place, who he was, and the circumstances in which he was placed; secondly, the situation in which Jesus was when he addressed Him; thirdly, the profession of faith which it contains; and fourthly, the prayer which it expressed.

I. *Consider the person who made the address, and the circumstances in which he was placed.* He was a thief and a robber—one who, by his own confession, merited the ignominious death which he was suffering. Abandoning the path of honest industry, he had betaken himself to the highway, and procured his livelihood by preying on the property and life of the peaceable. When we consider the character of Barabbas, whom they preferred to Jesus, and the design for which His fellow-sufferers were selected, we may be sure that they were criminals of the worst sort, whose practices had excited general hatred and terror.

We all know what the characters of those who have devoted themselves to this mode of living are—how reckless of life, how destitute of principle—how enslaved to every base and malignant passion—how dead to all the feelings of honor, reputation, compassion, or compunction—how insensible to the remonstrances of conscience, or the lessons of experience—how regardless of God or man—how disposed to mock at every thing that is sacred, at death, judgment, and eternity; you can not point to a class of men from whom you could select an individual less likely to be affected by the scene of the crucifixion, or to sympathize with the meek, and patient, and forgiving Jesus. The conduct of the thief who reviled Him, and the words which he is represented as having used, are just what we would have expected from such a person in such circumstances. Matthew and Mark, in their account of the crucifixion, say, "The thieves, also, who were crucified with Him, reviled Him," and "cast the same in His teeth," from which we might conclude that both acted in the same manner when first affixed to the cross, but that one of them underwent a sudden change in his sentiments, which produced a complete alteration on his language, and led him to justify and pray to the Saviour whom he had a little before reviled and outraged.

This is no impossible thing. Transformations as wonderful and as sudden have been effected. Saul of Tarsus was arrested in the midst of his mad career, and he who was "breathing out threatenings" against all who called on the name of Jesus of Nazareth, was found the next moment invoking that name of which he had been "a blasphemer," and with the most humble and implicit submission praying, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" The jailor of Philippi is another example. Having found the prison doors open, and supposing that Paul and Silas had escaped, he was in the very act of sheathing his drawn sword in his own bowels, when on a sudden, on the speaking of a few words, the weapon of destruction dropped from his hands, and the bold and determined suicide hung trembling on the knees of his prisoners, and under a deep concern about the safety, not of his body, but his soul, cried out, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

The same power which was so visibly exerted in these instances, could have easily purified the fountain of ungodliness in this man's heart at the very moment that the words of bitter derision were flowing from his tongue, and made them to be followed by the sweet and salutary streams of blessing and prayer, streaming from a smitten, softened, opened, and sanctified soul. But as the Evangelist Luke gives the most circumstantial narrative of the extraordinary incident, it is more natural to consider his detail as qualifying and explaining the general statement of his brethren; and he represents only one of the malefactors as reviling Jesus, and the other as vindicating Him.

Nor is it uncommon in Scripture to affirm that of a number of persons or things of the same kind which is true of one of them only. Thus we are told that the ark rested on the mountains of "Ararat" that is on one of them; that Lot "dwelt in the cities of the plain," that is in one of them; that "the soldiers ran and filled a sponge with vinegar," that is one of them did so. In like manner we are told, "the thieves railed on Him," that is one of them did it. Although, however, the person mentioned in our text did not join in the blasphemies of his comrade, we have every reason for thinking that the cross was the place of his conversion; and that he came to it with no more knowledge of Jesus, and no more love to Him than his fellow had. But while he was suspended on the cross his heart was changed—he was convinced of sin, enlightened in the knowledge of the Saviour, who was crucified along with him, humbled, sanctified, and made a new man. That the influence by which this was brought about was divine, there can not be a moment's doubt. The only question is—as the Spirit of God does not ordinarily produce this change on the minds of adults without the intervention and use of external means—by what instrumentality was this man converted, and how did he attain that knowledge of the truth concerning Christ which he displayed in his address to Him?

When Jesus began to teach in the synagogue of His native place His townsmen were astonished, and exclaimed, "Whence hath this man this wisdom? Is not this the carpenter's son? Whence then hath He all these things?" There is reason for putting the same question as to this thief, and under a similar feeling of astonishment. Like others who have followed his unlawful trade, we have every reason to think he was brought up in ignorance and profaneness, and that he was as destitute of religious knowledge as he was of moral honesty. He was too much occupied with his trade to attend on the sermons or witness the miracles of Jesus; and his exclusion from all sober and decent society, must have prevented him from hearing of them by the report of others.

By what means then did he acquire the knowledge of Him? In his prison he might hear of His arraignment and sentence; and after he knew that He was to be crucified along with him, curiosity would induce him to inquire into the cause of His condemnation. This might perhaps satisfy him that Jesus was no evil-doer—that He had been guilty of no murder, or theft, or sedition, and that the envy of the chief priests had delivered Him up to Pilate; and it is probable that his companion also knew all this, and had the same conviction in his breast, although he railed on Him as an impostor. But it was at Golgotha, and when hanging on the accursed tree that he acquired that knowledge which issued in his conversion. And what were the means of his instruction? None that I can discover or tell you of, my brethren, but what he was able to glean from the speeches of those who were below, from the few words which Jesus had spoken, and from the inscription on His cross.

The first he had heard say, "He saved others;" and who can tell what light this saying might let into an understanding opened by the Spirit of God? He had also heard them speak of Him, although with incredulity, as "the Christ, the King of Israel, the Son of God, who trusted in God that He would deliver Him." He had heard the remarkable and heart-melting prayer which Jesus offered up for His murderers, when they were in the act of nailing Him to the tree, "Father forgive them; for they know not what they do;" and he had a practical commentary on them in the meekness and patience with which he "endured the cross, despising the shame." And he had an opportunity of reading the inscription which was written over His head in legible characters, in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

This, my brethren, was at once the text and the sermon by which the thief was converted: and accordingly the language of his address and prayer is borrowed from it. He believed that He was "Jesus" a Saviour. He believed that He was a "King;" and he believed that His cross was the way to His crown, for it witnessed of it, and it pointed to it. And believing this, and encouraged by it to put his trust in Him, he said, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." Think it not strange—at least think it not incredible—that the words of scorn and derision spoken by an infatuated, infuriated mob, should be made the means of so much good to this man's soul. They were truth, saving truth, and contained the substance of the Gospel, and of what Jesus had taught concerning Himself.

Think it not incredible that the inscription devised by an unbelieving and unjust judge, should have been the means of delivering a criminal, whom he had condemned to an excruciating death, from a doom still more awful. It contained the very truth which the person to whom it referred had testified when He stood at the bar of Pilate, and it was devised and written at the secret instigation of Him whose "determinate counsel" the Roman Governor executed in this as well as in other parts of this divinely ordered transaction. Many an excellent, savory, and saving sermon has been preached from the insidious saying of the arch-priest Caiaphas, "It is expedient that one man should die for the people, and that the whole whole nation perish not." And why, in that year, and on that day, which was big with the eternal destinies of a world, to which all the prophets and holy men from the beginning had looked forward, and all holy men to the end shall look back, why at such a time should not a pagan magistrate have been made to prophesy as well as a

Jewish priest? And why should not his prophecy have been the means of enlightening the mind of a robber and qualifying him for confessing the dying Redeemer of sinners, both Jewish and Gentile?

But, my brethren, we are to remember that it is one thing for us to perceive the meaning of this inscription, possessing as we do, the whole New Testament, yea, the whole Bible, as a commentary on it, and having leisure to compare the commentary with the text; and that it was quite another thing for the thief without any such helps, to decipher its language and extricate its sense: and that, too, while he hung on the cross in a state of exquisite bodily pain. That he should have been able to do this, and by what process of thought he came to the conclusion which he drew, will continue always to be matter of wonder—a monument of the inscrutable wisdom and amazing grace of Him who works by whatever means it pleaseth Him to employ.

II. Consider the *situation in which Jesus was placed when this man addressed Him in the words of the text.* During His personal ministry, the rays of His glory often pierced the vail of His outward humiliation, so that those that saw its manifestations had all their doubts dissipated, and were assured that He came from God, and was the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. But this man became acquainted with Him, and beheld Him not at Jordan where heaven pronounced Him its Son; or, at Cana of Galilee, where He manifested forth His glory; or by the lake of Tiberias, where He fed the multitude: or in Bethany, where He raised Lazarus: or in Tabor, where He was transfigured: but he beheld Him for the first time at Golgotha, where, instead of speaking as never man spake, He was dumb as a sheep before her shearers, and instead of doing mighty works, was crucified through weakness. At this time His glory was not merely under a cloud; it was in an eclipse, and seemed to have set never to reappear. It was the hour and power of darkness.

Formerly He had been followed by multitudes, who crowded to Him and thronged Him, and when He withdrew they followed Him and sought Him out with great eagerness—the whole world was gone out after Him, and they talked of making Him a king, so that the chief priests became alarmed, and His disciples, seeing matters in so prosperous-like a train, thought it high time to look out for themselves, and to secure the most honorable places in that kingdom which He was about to erect. But this flattering prospect had evanished. The multitude which followed Him for a time had melted away gradually, until He was left alone with the twelve;

and at last He was forsaken by them also. One of them betrayed Him, another abjured Him, and all the rest fled and were scattered; and their unfaithful and cowardly desertion had affixed a stigma on His pretensions, which all the malice and misrepresentation of His open adversaries had not been able to inflict.

When He was arraigned before the high priest, hopes of His safety still remained: for the Romans retained the power of life and death in their own hands, and Pilate was not only disposed to let Him go, but labored to accomplish His release. Even after He was condemned to die, the case did not appear desperate: for those who had witnessed His miracles, and seen the band sent to apprehend Him struck to the ground, merely by His saying to them, "I am He" might flatter themselves that His enemies would be unable to carry their sentence into execution. This last hope had proved fallacious. He had suffered Himself to be led as a lamb to the slaughter. He was now affixed to the tree and was fast bleeding to death. There He hung between two notorious malefactors, disowned by all His former friends, insulted over by His enemies, heaven shut against His prayer, hell gaping for Him as its prey. It was in these circumstances, when the cause of Jesus was in the most desperate-like condition, that this man, openly and for the first time, professed his faith in Him.

III. *Consider the import of the profession contained in His address.* Had he merely professed his belief that Jesus was an innocent man —that He had done nothing amiss or worthy of death, it would have been a great deal. Had he avowed that he thought Him no impostor, but a true prophet, this would have been more than could have been expected, considering the circumstances in which both were placed. How hesitatingly and suspiciously did the two disciples, on the road to Emmaus, express themselves on this subject:— "We trusted that it had been He that should have redeemed Israel."

But this man went far beyond this point in his profession. He addressed Him as "Lord." The chief priests and rulers of the Jews spoke of Him in the most contemptuous style—"this fellow" and "that deceiver." When Peter was challenged as one of His disciples, he said that he knew not "the man." The highest epithet that the disciples could give Him after they had received a report of His resurrection, was, "Jesus of Nazareth, a prophet mighty in word and deed." The thief addresses Him now, by that title which the apostles gave Him, after He had shown Himself to them by infallible proofs. They could say "the Lord is risen:" but they could not, like this thief, call Him Lord, when He hung on the cross. Nor was this a mere title of respect. The cross was no place for complimentary or ceremonious language. In such circumstances he would not have owned Him at all if he had not been persuaded that He was the Lord of all, of life and death, of heaven and hell. And as he addressed Him as Lord, so he avowed his conviction that He was going to take possession of a kingdom.

Wonderful faith! A dying man, a worm and no man, reproach of men and despised of the people, the lowest of the people, he addresses as Lord, and worships Him! One whom he had seen arrayed in derision with the mock ensigns of royalty, and then stripped of them and led away to be crucified, whom he had heard taunted with His kingly claims, and in vain desired to come down from the cross to give a proof of their validity, he, nevertheless, saluted, in deep earnest, as a king; and while God had set up the right hand of His adversaries, made all His enemies to rejoice, shortened the days of His youth, covered Him with shame, and profaned His crown by casting it to the ground, he, strong in faith, staggered not, but, against hope, believed in hope, and avowed his confident assurance that He was about to ascend the throne of His kingdom!

Verily, such faith as this had not been evinced from the days of the Father of the faithful. And then how superior do his conceptions of the nature of Christ's kingdom appear to have been! The Jews of that time had very gross and carnal notions of the reign of Messiah. They imagined that He would appear as a temporal and earthly monarch, emancipate them from the thralldom of a foreign yoke, and make the nations tributary to them. The disciples of Jesus had imbibed some of these prejudices, to which they clung pertinaciously, in spite of all the instructions of their Master; nor were they altogether weaned from this erroneous and fond conceit by His crucifixion, as appears from the question which they put to Him after He was risen: "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

How superior were the views which the converted thief acquired on this subject in a short time, to those of the disciples after they had for years listened to the spiritual doctrine, and contemplated the heavenly character of their Master! The prospect of His death was repugnant to all their ideas, and destructive of all their expectations of His kingly glory: and when they saw Him led away to be crucified, their hopes died away within them. He owned Him to be a king in the lowest step of His abasement, and believed that His cross was the pedestal by which He would mount to His throne in the highest heavens.

IV. *Let us, in fine, consider this address as a prayer.* It was said of Saul of Tarsus, after his conversion, and as one mark of that change which he had undergone, "Behold he prayeth!" He had never prayed aright before that period, though, as a strict Pharisee, he had no doubt often practiced the external form. But this was probably the first time that ever the thief had engaged in the exercise; the first time in his life that he had offered to God the sacrifice of the lips; prayer is not an employment reconcilable with the trade which he had followed. It is necessary for such persons to banish the fear, and consequently to exclude the thought of God. If that sacred name had come into his mouth it would be in the form of hellish oaths or blasphemies. But now, behold he prayeth! and that in deep earnest. He prayed to Jesus, whom his fellow-criminal was blaspheming, invoked Him as Lord, and begged of Him the greatest favor which, as a dying man, he could ask.

Criminals have often been seen praying on a scaffold, and they have earnestly begged for a pardon, or a respite, or some other boon from their judges: but this is the only instance in which a criminal was found supplicating and praying to his fellow-sufferer. And what was the petition which he presented? It was not for deliverance from death or for any temporal blessing. He did not even seriously prefer the request of his comrade, "Save Thyself and us." He was perfectly resigned to his fate. He was willing to endure the punishment due to his crime by the laws of God and man, and to expiate, by his own death, the offense which he had done to society, while he who hung beside him expiated the sin which he had committed against heaven. Lord! I have no desire to live. It is good for me to be here. It is better for me to die with Thee than to reign with Cæsar. All my desire is to be with Thee where Thou art going; and O remember Thy unworthy fellow-sufferer when thou art come into Thy kingdom!

What unfeigned and contrite humility does this petition breathe! He prays as became one who felt, and had confessed himself to be a great sinner, and who could have no possible claims but what were founded on the mere and unbought benignity of Him whom he addressed. When the two sons of Zebedee requested to be permitted to sit, the one at the right and the other at the left hand of their Master in His kingdom, He asked them, "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? or can ye be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" Here was one who was drinking of his bitter cup, and baptized with His bloody baptism; but he had no such ambitious wish, and presumed to present no such arrogant request. His heart was not haughty: his eyes were not lofty: neither did he aspire to great things. A genuine convert, his heart was like that of a weaned child. All that he ventured to ask was, that Jesus would remember him when He came into His kingdom. But though presented with the profoundest humility, and expressive of the greatest submission, still this was a great request.

O how much, my brethren, is included in these two words, addressed by a convinced sinner to the Saviour, "*remember me!*" The eternal salvation of a sinner hangs upon them. If He remembers him, all is well; if He forgets him, woe unto him, for it shall be ill with him. Had not Christ remembered and thought upon us in our low estate, and undertaken our cause, we would have been hopeless. Had He not remembered His people, and borne their names on His breastplate, when He approached God as the Great High Priest to make reconciliation for iniquity, their guilt would have remained. Did He not remember them, when they are lying polluted in their blood, and say to them, "Live!" they would die in their sins. Did He not continue to remember them, and pray for them, and help them by His Spirit, he that desires to have them for his prey would gain his object, and they would never see the kingdom of heaven. Had the penitent thief dropped out of the memory of Christ, he would have dropped into hell at death, along with his blaspheming companion: for, "Nor thieves nor revilers shall inherit the kingdom of God." How could he, an ignorant, lawless, God-despising, heaven-daring profligate, presume to lift up his eyes, or to apply at the gates of paradise, unless he had ground to believe that his gracious and merciful fellow-sufferer would remember him? But if he continued to think of Him and own Him, what might he not expect?

In fine, this prayer was offered believingly, as well as fervently. He believed that Jesus had the highest interest with the Father, who would not refuse any thing which should be craved by Him, who had laid down His life at His command; that He was about to be put in possession of all power in heaven and earth; and that this included authority to bestow its honors and rewards on whomsoever He would. And he believed that such was the grace, condescension and compassion of the dying Redeemer, that He would not reject the application of a poor, convicted, condemned criminal, but wash him from his sins in His blood, and sanctify him by the power of His Spirit, and present him faultless before the throne of His glory with exceeding joy. Nor did he believe in vain, nor was the answer of his prayer long delayed or dubiously expressed; for Jesus instantly said to him, "Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise."

In reviewing this wonderful scene, a variety of reflections, all conducive to practical improvement, crowd upon the mind. Let us dwell a little on a few of them.

First. We have here an indisputable instance of real conversion. Examples of this change have occurred in every age, as to the genuineness of which we have no reasonable ground to doubt. But the case of the penitent thief is accompanied with evidence the most irresistible and convincing. Who can doubt that on the cross a sinner was converted from the evil of his ways, a soul saved from death, and a multitude of sins hid? When the Lord writeth up the people whom He hath formed for Himself, He will count that this man was born again on Calvary. While I run over the credible marks of a saving change which he exhibited, let it be your employment, my brethren, to examine and see whether they are to be found in you also.

He confessed himself to be a sinner and worthy of death, when no creature exacted this confession, and when it could be of no earthly advantage to him. His heart was penetrated with a reverential fear of God, which made him not only refrain from offending Him himself, but shudder at hearing what was offensive to Him from the lips of another. He entertained just, and high, and honorable views of the Saviour. He looked to Him on the cross, and placed all his hopes of salvation on His merciful remembrance of him. He prayed to Him, and committed his soul to Him as the Lord of the invisible world. He gave every evidence which was in his power of the truth of his faith, repentance, and love. His hands and feet were immovably fixed to the tree. Nothing was left free to him but his heart and his tongue, and these he dedicated wholly to God, and employed to the honor of Christ. His conduct corresponded to the inspired criterion, and verified it: "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

He not only deplored his own, but he also faithfully, yet meekly, reproved the sin of his companion, and of the multitude which surrounded him, and used all the means which were in his power to arrest their ungodly career, and to bring them to repentance. He was clothed with humility. His affections were set on things above, and not on things on the earth. His conversation was in heaven. No corrupt communication proceeded from his mouth, but that which was good to the use of edifying. All bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil-speaking he put away from him with all malice; he was kind, tender-hearted, forgiving; and was not this a proof that God, for Christ's sake, had forgiven him?

Who imagines that if this man had been let down from the cross he would have returned to his old companions and his old practices?—who doubts that he that stole would have stolen no more, but have wrought with his hands that he might give to him that needeth; that he would have been a bright and living example of renovation; that he would have joined himself to the apostles, and continued steadfastly in their doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer? Would to God that all that hear me this day were both almost and altogether such as this malefactor was, except the nails by which he was affixed to the tree!

Secondly. We have here a distinguished proof of the power of Divine grace. Speaking of what he had been, and contrasting it with what he had become, Paul exclaims, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ was exceeding abundant!" We can not think of the conversion of this man without making the same reflection. He had been a great sinner, an ignorant, profane, ungodly, lawless, hardened ruffian.

But O! how changed from what he was! so much so that his former associates, who had known him most intimately, could not now know him to be the same person. He is, indeed, become a new man, a new creature: "Old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." The lion, who had gone about seeking whom he might devour, is changed into the lamb; the blasphemer into a preacher of righteousness; the robber into a reprover of vice. And how sudden the transformation! He came to the cross with all the evil passions rankling in his breast, and he had scarcely been affixed to it, when their poison was plucked out, and they gave place to mildness, gentleness, and compassion for the sufferings of others. He came to it with his mouth filled with cursing and bitterness, and when upon it, we find him employed only in praying and exhorting. He was lifted up on the cross polluted with the blood of others, he was taken down from it washed from his sins in the blood of Christ. He was suspended as a malefactor, and he died as a martyr.

What can withstand or resist the power of the grace which produced such a change as this? What is too hard, what can be difficult for it? It can pardon the greatest sins, subdue the strongest corruptions, eradicate the most deep-rooted prejudices, cure the most inveterate habits; in a word, change the most desperately wicked heart.

Thirdly. Contemplate in this scene an instance of late conversion. It was the last hour with this malefactor. His days were numbered, and the last of them had dawned on him in as hopeless a condition as ever—with all his sins upon him, unrepented of and unpardoned, without the smallest preparation for appearing before his righteous and impartial judge. He was brought out of his cell, he was led away to be crucified, he was lifted upon the cross, he hung over the yawning pit which was ready to receive him, when the Saviour, who was at his right hand, had compassion on him, apprehended him by His grace, and plucked him as a brand from the fire. Miraculous escape! Wonderful intervention! Ineffable expression of the patience and mercy of Him who is God and not man! In one and the same day this man was in the gall of bitterness, and in the delights of paradise; associated with felons, and admitted into the society of angels; in concord with Belial, and in fellowship with Christ.

This singular fact is recorded in Scripture; and we know that whatever was written aforetime, was written for our learning. It teaches us by example what our Saviour taught by parable, that persons may be called into God's vineyard at the last hour, and that He will bestow upon them the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ, as well as upon those who have borne the burden and heat of the day. And shall their eye be evil because He is good? Or shall we be ashamed or afraid to produce this example, and to point to the encouragement which it holds out because some will speak evil of the good ways of God, or others will abuse His tender mercy to their own perdition? No! while there is life there is hope—while sinners are on God's footstool they may look up to the throne of His grace. He waits to be gracious, His long-suffering is salvation. This message we are warranted to carry into the cell of the convict—to the bedside of the dying profligate—and to proclaim it in public to persons of all ages.

The most hoary-headed sinner in this assembly may find mercy of the Lord. Though thou hast provoked God and grieved Him for forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, fourscore years, yet to-day, if thou wilt hear His voice, and harden not your heart, thou shalt enter into His rest, and be received into His glory. You need not say, "Who shall ascend into heaven to bring Christ down?" He who was near to the thief on the cross, is near to you in the preaching of the cross. O, then, delay not to improve the precious season which will not last long, which passeth away, and will soon come to a close! Look to

Him, believe on Him, cry to Him, confessing your sins, "Lord, remember me, now when Thou art come into Thy kingdom." Look on Him whom you have pierced by your iniquities, until your hearts are smitten with the sight, and you are made to mourn as for an only son, and to be in bitterness as for a first-born; and He will heal you by the virtue of His stripes, and by the sovereign efficacy of His free spirit.

But this example, while it invites to repentance, gives no encouragement to presumption. It has been justly remarked that one instance of conversion at the latest period of life has been recorded in the Bible, that none may despair, and *but* one instance, that none may presume, or delay this important work to the last. Not to insist on the singularity of this man's situation, and the propriety of the Redeemer's displaying the power of His grace, and the virtue of His blood when hanging on the cross by a signal and extraordinary act of mercy, the history of the converted malefactor affords not a shadow of encouragement or excuse to those who resist the calls of the Gospel, and procrastinate repentance; for he had not enjoyed those calls, nor is there any good reason for thinking that he ever heard or saw the Saviour before.

It is sinful to limit the holy One, and to despair of His mercy and ability to save, in the most extreme case; but it is awfully sinful, it is a fearful tempting and provoking of the Most High, to delay repentance in the hope of finding mercy at a future period. When put into plain language it just amounts to this, "I will continue in sin because the grace of God abounds. I will go on to disobey Him, and rebel against Him, and affront Him, in the confidence that He will pardon me whenever I shall be pleased to turn to Him, and that He will receive me when I am weary of sinning, and can no longer find pleasure in it."

If this is not to "sin willfully, after having received the knowledge of the truth"—if it is not to "sin the sin unto death," it is something very like it. What can such persons expect but that God will pronounce against them His fearful oath of exclusion, cease to strive with them any longer by His Spirit, say to the ministers of His word and of His providence "Let them alone," and give them up to the uncontrolled operation of their own corruptions, increased and aggravated by indulgence, and by the influence of the god of this world.

How know you that you shall have time for repentance? You may be struck dead in a single moment, in the very act of sinning with a high hand. Or you may be struck motionless and senseless, without a tongue to confess your sins, or your faith in the Saviour—without an eye to read the record of salvation—without an ear to hear its gladdening sounds from preacher or friend—without a memory to recollect what you have heard or known of it. Although time for reflection should be granted you, and though the gate of mercy should stand open before you, yet your soul may be so filled with darkness, and unbelief, and remorse that you can not perceive the way of escape, and may die, like Judas, in despair.

Though quaintly expressed, there is much truth in the saying, "True repentance is never too late, but late repentance is seldom true." How many instances are there of "repentance" in sickness, and in the prospect of death being "repented of." Judicious persons who have had occasion to deal with the irreligious in such circumstances, have a saddening report to make of the result of their experience. How many of them have died as they have lived, ignorant, insensible, hardened. Of those who survived, and were delivered from the terrors of death, how many "returned, like the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire!" And among those who died with the accents of penitence on their lips, of how few can they speak, but in the language of trembling hope!

We often hear of the contrition of condemned malefactors, and it is not uncommon to represent them as having exhibited decided marks of conversion in their cells and on the scaffold: but there is reason to think that credulity is mingled with charity in these reports. Charity should dispose us to form the most favorable hopes of individuals, but when we speak on this subject, and especially when we make our sentiments public, we should recollect that charity for the dead may be cruelty to the living. If such persons were to be pardoned and restored to life, we may judge what would be the result with multitudes of them, from what we see in the case of those who have been recovered from a dangerous sickness. How rarely do we meet, in such cases, with the unequivocal proofs of sincere repentance which were evinced in the crucified malefactor!

Fourthly. See here a striking example of the different effects produced by the preaching of Christ crucified. To the one malefactor the cross was the savor of life unto life, to the other it was the savor of death unto death; to the former it was the power of God unto salvation, to the latter it was a stumbling-block; it softened the heart of the former, it hardened the heart of the latter; it prepared the one for heaven, it rendered the other twofold more a child of hell. Here we perceive the exceeding riches of sovereign grace, and the desperate depravity of the human heart when left to its native operation.

O the blindness, the infatuation, the obduracy of this impenitent malefactor, whom neither the reproofs and contrition of his companion, nor the meekness and patience of Jesus, nor the acts of clemency and grace which he witnessed, could soften! He saw the rich treasures of grace opened; he heard the humble petition of his comrade; he heard the gracious return made to it, granting him more than he had ventured to ask; he was a witness to the kingdom of heaven being bestowed on a fellow-convict:—and yet He remained proud and impenitent, and would not bend his mind to ask what he might have freely received. Yet this is no strange or uncommon thing; it is every day verified in multitudes who enjoy the Gospel.

Fifthly. How mysterious and manifold the ways by which God imparts the knowledge of His mind to men—makes those that are blind to see, and those that see, to be blind!

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The inscription which a heathen ruler ordered to be affixed to the cross, and which he refused to recall or to modify, because the instrument of savingly enlightening an ignorant malefactor, and enabling him to silence and still the increasing tumult of those who maliciously or ignorantly reviled the Holy One and the Just. O, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

Sixthly. What a small portion of truth will be of saving benefit to a person when accompanied by the blessing of the Divine Spirit! Who teacheth like God! When the vision of all is to the learned as a sealed book, and the eyes of the prophets and their rulers and seers are covered, He can unvail its mysteries to the most ignorant and uninitiated. By means of a few words He can make the outcasts of society wise to salvation, while those who despised and cursed them have "precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little," and yet all the effect is that they "fall backward, and are broken, and snared and taken." What slender means will prove successful when God puts His hand to the work!

What a small portion of truth will irradiate the mind of a sinner, and dispel its darkness, when the Spirit of God makes way for it, and accompanies it home with His secret and irresistible influence!

DISCOURSE SIXTY-THIRD.

THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D.

DR. CHALMERS was born at Anstruthers, near St. Andrews, in the year 1780. He showed in early life signs of great powers; and was soundly educated in the University of St. Andrews, where he won for himself distinguished honors in literature and the physical sciences. At the early age of twenty-three he was ordained; his first settlement being at Cavers, from which place he removed to Kilmany. It is well known that at the time of his ordination he had not experienced the transforming power of the Divine Spirit. He was awakened to his need of the saving knowledge of God, by the investigations which he made in the "Evidences of Christianity," in preparing an article on that subject for the "Edinburg Encyclopedia;" and was thenceforward a new man. In 1815, Dr. Chalmers settled at Glasgow; and in 1824 he became Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of St. Andrews. Four years later he came to the chair of Theology in Edinburg University. Chalmers was foremost among the founders of the Free Church of Scotland, who went out of the establishment in 1843, to secure for their country the "Crown Rights of Jesus Christ." He afterward became Professor of Theology to the seceding body. Undimmed as to his energies by toil and age, he labored on in the Master's cause until the night of the 30th of May, 1847; when, after his usual Sabbath duties, he retired to rest with his writing materials at his side, to resume his studies in the morning; but died in his bed, as is supposed of a disease of the heart

It is needless to speak of Chalmers's unsurpassed pulpit ability, of the exhaustless wealth of his many productions upon morals, theology, and religion, and the rich legacy which he has left to the ministry and the churches, in his learned and eloquent sermons and discourses. Ample justice is done to these various subjects in the admirable Memoirs by Dr. Hanna. Chalmers is described as having been of about middle height, thick-set and brawny, but not corpulent, with a face rather broad, high cheek bones, pale and care-worn, eyes of a leaden color, nose broad and lion-like, mouth exceedingly expressive, and a forehead ample and high, covered, in advanced life, with thin, straggling gray hair.

An ardent admirer of this great divine has given the following eloquent and life-like picture of his preaching:

"His discourses resemble mountain torrents, dashing in strength and beauty, amid rocks and woods, carrying every thing before them, and gathering force as they leap and foam from point to point in their progress to the sea. Calm and even sluggish in his appearance when at rest, he was on fire when fairly roused; and at times, raising himself up in his pulpit, with hand outstretched and burning eye, seemed as if he were inspired. A true Son of Thunder, he swept the minds of his hearers, as the tempest sweeps the ocean, calling forth its world of waves from their inmost depths, and filling the firmament above with its far-resounding roar. In his family and among his friends, he was 'gentle as the dew from heaven,' but in the pulpit, and especially when defending 'the Covenant and Crown Rights of Emmanuel,' he was as a storm amid the hills of his native land. With a majesty of thought and vehemence of manner perfectly irresistible, he swept every thing before him, and left his hearers with no power but that of admiration or surprise."*

It is a frequent remark that one would not have supposed him possessed of this vehemence of manner, judging by his printed productions.

The discourse which is here given, has not the boldness of expression which characterizes some of Chalmers's productions; but, in marking it as upon the whole his masterpiece, we have the concurrent opinion of some of the best critics who have pronounced upon the comparative merits of his sermons. He is grand and terrific in his "Fury not in God;" but that discourse lacks the depth, transparency, beauty, precision, and strength of expression seen in the one that follows.

THE EXPULSIVE POWER OF A NEW AFFECTION.

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."—1 JOHN, ii. 15.

There are two ways in which a practical moralist may attempt to displace from the human heart its love of the world—either by a demonstration of the world's vanity, so as that the heart shall be prevailed upon simply to withdraw its regards from an object that is not worthy of it; or, by setting forth another object, even God, as more worthy of its attachment; so as that the heart shall be prevailed upon, not to resign an old affection which shall have nothing to succeed it, but to exchange an old affection for a new one. My purpose is to show, that from the constitution of our nature, the former method is altogether incompetent and ineffectual—and that the latter method will alone suffice for the rescue and recovery of the heart from the wrong affection that domineers over it. After having accomplished this purpose, I shall attempt a few practical observations.

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* Rev. R. Turnbull, D.D., in "Tribute to Memory of Vinet and Chalmers."

Love may be regarded in two different conditions. The first is, when its object is at a distance, and then it becomes love in a state of desire. The second is, when its object is in possession, and then it becomes love in a state of indulgence. Under the impulse of desire, man feels himself urged onward in some path or pursuit of activity for its gratification. The faculties of his mind are put into busy exercise. In the steady direction of one great and engrossing interest, his attention is recalled from the many reveries into which it might otherwise have wandered; and the powers of his body are forced away from an indolence in which it else might have languished; and that time is crowded with occupation, which but for some object of keen and devoted ambition, might have driveled along in successive hours of weariness and distaste—and though hope does not always enliven, and success does not always crown this career of exertion, yet in the midst of this very variety, and with the alternations of occasional disappointment, is the machinery of the whole man kept in a sort of congenial play, and upholden in that tone and temper which are most agreeable to it. Insomuch, that if through the extirpation of that desire which forms the originating principle of all this movement, the machinery were to stop, and to receive no impulse from another desire substituted in its place, the man would be left with all his propensities to action in a state of most painful and unnatural abandonment. A sensitive being suffers, and is in violence, if, after having thoroughly rested from his fatigue, or been relieved from his pain, he continue in possession of powers without any excitement to these powers; if he possess a capacity of desire without having an object of desire; or if he have a spare energy upon his person, without a counterpart, and without a stimulus to call it into operation. The misery of such a condition is often realized by him who is retired from business, or who is retired from law, or who is even retired from the occupations of the chase, and of the gaming-table. Such is the demand of our nature for an object in pursuit, that no accumulation of previous success can extinguish it—and thus it is, that the most prosperous merchant, and the most victorious general, and the most fortunate gamester, when the labor of their respective vocations has come to a close, are often found to languish in the midst of all their acquisitions, as if out of their kindred and rejoicing element. It is quite in vain with such a constitutional appetite for employment in man, to attempt cutting away from him the spring or the principle of one employment, without providing him with another. The whole heart and habit will rise in resistance against such an undertaking. The else unoccupied female, who spends the hours of every evening at some play of hazard, knows as well as you, that the pecuniary gain, or the honorable triumph of a successful contest, are altogether paltry. It is not such a demonstration of vanity as this that will force her away from her dear and delightful occupation. The habit can not so be displaced, as to leave nothing but a negative and cheerless vacancy behind it—though it may so be supplanted as to be followed up by another habit of employment, to which the power of some new affection has constrained her. It is willingly suspended, for example, on any single evening, should the time that is wont to be allotted to gaming, require to be spent on the preparations of an approaching assembly.

The ascendant power of a second affection will do, what no exposition, however forcible, of the folly and worthlessness of the first, ever could effectuate. And it is the same in the great world. You never will be able to arrest any of its leading pursuits, by a naked demonstration of their vanity. It is quite in vain to think of stopping one of these pursuits in any way else, but by stimulating to another. In attempting to bring a worthy man, intent and busied with the prosecution of his objects, to a dead stand, you have not merely to encounter the charm which he annexes to these objects—but you have to encounter the pleasure which he feels in the very prosecution of them. It is not enough, then, that you dissipate the charm, by your moral, and eloquent, and affecting exposure of its illusiveness. You must address to the eye of his mind another object, with a charm powerful enough to dispossess the first of its influence, and to engage him in some other prosecution as full of interest, and hope, and congenial activity, as the former. It is this which stamps an impotency on all moral and pathetic declamation about the insignificance of the world. A man will no more consent to the misery of being without an object, because that object is a trifle, or of being without a pursuit, because that pursuit terminates in some frivolous or fugitive acquirement, than he will voluntarily submit himself to the torture, because that torture is to be of short duration. If to be without desire and without exertion altogether, is a state of violence and discomfort, then the present desire, with its correspondent train of exertion, is not to be got rid of simply by destroying it. It must be by substituting another desire, and another line or habit of exertion in its place—and the most effectual way of withdrawing the mind from one object, is not by turning it away upon desolate and unpeopled vacancy—but by presenting to its regards another object still more alluring.

These remarks apply not merely to love considered in its state of desire for an object not yet obtained. They apply also to love considered in its state of indulgence, or placid gratification, with an object already in possession. It is seldom that any of our tastes are made to disappear by a mere process of natural extinction. At least, it is very seldom that this is done through the instrumentality of reasoning. It may be done by excessive pampering—but it is almost never done by the mere force of mental determination. But what can not be thus destroyed, may be dispossessed—and one taste may be made to give way to another, and to lose its power entirely as the reigning affection of the mind. It is thus, that the boy ceases, at length, to be the slave of his appetite, but it is because a manlier taste has now brought it into subordination—and that the youth ceases to idolize pleasure, but it is because the idol of wealth has become the stronger and gotten the ascendency—and that even the love of money ceases to have the mastery over the heart of many a thriving citizen, but it is because drawn into the whirl of city politics, another affection has been wrought into his moral system, and he is now lorded over by the love of power. There is not one of these transformations in which the heart is left without an object. Its desire for one particular object may be conquered; but as to its desire for having some one object or other, this is unconquerable. Its adhesion to that on which it has fastened the preference of its regards, can not willingly be overcome by the rending away of a simple separation. It can be done only by the application of something else, to which it may feel the adhesion of a still stronger and more powerful preference. Such is the grasping tendency of the human heart, that it must have a something to lay hold of—and which, if wrested away without the substitution of another something in its place, would leave a void and a vacancy as painful to the mind, as hunger is to the natural system. It may be dispossessed of one object, or of any, but it can not be desolated of all. Let there be a breathing and a sensitive heart, but without a liking and without affinity to any of the things that are around it, and in a state of cheerless abandonment, it would be alive to nothing but the burden of its own consciousness, and feel it to be intolerable. It would make no difference to its owner, whether he dwelt in the midst of a gay and goodly world, or placed afar beyond the outskirts of creation, he dwelt a solitary unit in dark and unpeopled nothingness. The heart must have something to cling to—and never, by its own voluntary consent, will it so denude itself of all its attachments that there shall not be one remaining object that can draw or solicit it.

The misery of a heart thus bereft of all relish for that which is wont to minister enjoyment, is strikingly exemplified in those, who satiated with indulgence, have been so belabored, as it were, with the variety and the poignancy of the pleasurable sensations that they have experienced, that they are at length fatigued out of all capacity for sensation whatever. The disease of ennui is more frequent in the French metropolis, where amusement is more exclusively the occupation of higher classes, than it is in the British metropolis, where the longings of the heart are more diversified by the resources of business and politics. There are the votaries of fashion, who, in this way, have at length become the victims of fashionable excess—in whom the very multitude of their enjoyments, has at last extinguished their power of enjoyment—who, with the gratifications of art and nature at command, now look upon all that is around them with an eye of tastelessness—who, plied with the delights of sense and of splendor even to weariness, and incapable of higher delights, have come to the end of all their perfection, and like Solomon of old, found it to be vanity and vexation. The man whose heart has thus been turned into a desert, can vouch for the insupportable languor which must ensue, when one affection is thus plucked away from the bosom, without another to replace it. It is not necessary that a man receive pain from any thing, in order to become miserable. It is barely enough that he looks with distaste to every thing—and in that asylum which is the repository of minds out of joint, and where the organ of feeling as well as the organ of intellect, has been impaired, it is not in the cell of loud and frantic outcries where you will meet with the acmé of mental suffering. But that is the individual who outpeers in wretchedness all his fellows, who throughout the whole expanse of nature and society, meets not an object that has at all the power to detain or to interest him; who neither in earth beneath, nor in heaven above, knows of a single charm to which his heart can send forth one desirous or responding movement; to whom the world, in his eye a vast and empty desolation, has left him nothing but his own consciousness to feed upon—dead to all that is without him, and alive to nothing but to the load of his own torpid and useless existence.

It will now be seen, perhaps, why it is that the heart keeps by its present affections with so much tenacity—when the attempt is to do them away by a mere process of extirpation. It will not consent to be so desolated. The strong man, whose dwelling-place is there, may be compelled to give way to another occupier—but unless another stronger than he, has power to dispossess and to succeed him, he will keep his present lodgment inviolable. The heart would revolt against its own emptiness. It could not bear to be so left in a state of waste and cheerless insipidity. The moralist who tries such a process of dispossession as this upon the heart, is thwarted at every step by the recoil of its own mechanism. You have all heard that Nature abhors a vacuum. Such at least is the nature of the heart, that though the room which is in it may change one inmate for another, it can not be left void without pain of most intolerable suffering. It is not enough then to argue the folly of an existing affection. It is not enough, in the terms of a forcible or an affecting demonstration, to make good the evanescence of its object. It may not even be enough to associate the threats and terrors of some coming vengeance, with the indulgence of it. The heart may still resist the every application, by obedience to which it would finally be conducted to a state so much at war with all its appetites as that of downright inanition. So to tear away an affection from the heart, as to leave it bare of all its regards, and of all its preferences, were a hard and hopeless undertaking—and it would appear as if the alone powerful engine of dispossession, were to bring the mastery of another affection to bear upon it.

We know not a more sweeping interdict upon the affections of Nature, than that which is delivered by the apostle in the verse before us. To bid a man into whom there is not yet entered the great and ascendant influence of the principle of regeneration, to bid him withdraw his love from all the things that are in the world, is to bid him give up all the affections that are in his heart. The world is the all of a natural man. He has not a taste, nor a desire, that points not to a something placed within the confines of its visible horizon. He loves nothing above it, and he cares for nothing beyond it; and to bid him love not the world, is to pass a sentence of expulsion on all the inmates of his bosom. To estimate the magnitude and the difficulty of such a surrender, let us only think that it were just as arduous to prevail on him not to love wealth, which is but one of the things in the world, as to prevail on him to set willful fire to his own property. This he might do with sore and painful reluctance, if he saw that the salvation of his life hung upon it. But this he would do willingly if he saw that a new property of tenfold value was instantly to emerge from the wreck of the old one. In this case there is something more than the mere displacement of an affection. There is the overbearing of one affection by another. But to desolate his heart of all love for the things of the world, without the substitution of any love in its place, were to him a process of as unnatural violence, as to destroy all the things he has in the world, and give him nothing in their room. So that, if to love not the world be indispensable to one's Christianity, then the crucifixion of the old man is not too strong a term to mark that transition in his history, when all old things are done away, and all things are become new.

We hope that by this time, you understand the impotency of a mere demonstration of this world's insignificance. Its sole practical effect, if it had any, would be to leave the heart in a state to which every heart is insupportable, and that is a mere state of nakedness and negation. You may remember the fond and unbroken tenacity with which your heart has often recurred to pursuits, over the utter frivolity of which it sighed and wept but yesterday. The arithmetic of your short-lived days, may on Sabbath make the clearest impression upon your understanding—and from his fancied bed of death, may the preacher cause a voice to descend in rebuke and mockery on all the pursuits of earthliness—and as he pictures before you the fleeting generations of men, with the absorbing grave, whither all the joys and interests of the world hasten to their sure and speedy oblivion, may you, touched and solemnized by his argument, feel for a moment as if on the eve of a practical and permanent emancipation from the scene of so much vanity. But the morrow comes, and the business of the world, and the objects of the world, and the moving forces of the world comes along with it—and the machinery of the heart, in virtue of which it must have something to grasp, or something to adhere to, brings it under a kind of moral necessity to be actuated just as before—and in utter repulsion toward a state so unkindly as that of being frozen out both of delight and of desire, does it feel all the warmth and the urgency of its wonted solicitations—nor in the habit and history of the whole man, can we detect so much as one symptom of the new creature—so that the church, instead of being to him a school of obedience, has been a mere sauntering place for the luxury of a passing and theatrical emotion; and the preaching which is mighty to compel the attendance of multitudes, which is mighty to still and solemnize the hearers into a kind of tragic sensibility, which is mighty in the play of variety and vigor that it can keep up around the imagination, is not mighty to the pulling down of strongholds.

The love of the world can not be expunged by a mere demonstration of the world's worthlessness. But may it not be supplanted by the love of that which is more worthy than itself? The heart can not be prevailed upon to part with the world, by a simple act of resignation. But may not the heart be prevailed upon to admit into its preference another, who shall subordinate the world, and bring it down from its wonted ascendency? If the throne which is placed there, must have an occupier, and the tyrant that now reigns has occupied it wrongfully, he may not leave a bosom which would rather detain him, than be left in desolation. But may he not give way to the lawful sovereign, appearing with every charm that can secure his willing admittance, and taking unto Himself His great power to subdue the moral nature of man, and to reign over it? In a word, if the way to disengage the heart from the positive love of one great and ascendant object, is to fasten it in positive love to another, then it is not by exposing the worthlessness of the former, but by addressing to the mental eye the worth and excellence of the latter, that all old things are to be done away, and all things are to become new.

To obliterate all our present affections, by simply expunging them, and so as to leave the seat of them unoccupied, would be to destroy the old character, and to substitute no new character in its place. But when they take their departure upon the ingress of other visitors; when they resign their sway to the power and predominance of new affections; when, abandoning the heart to solitude, they merely give place to a successor who turns it into as busy a residence of desire, and interest, and expectation as before—there is nothing in all this to thwart or to overbear any of the laws of our sentient nature—and we see now, in fullest accordance with the mechanism of the heart, a great moral revolution may be made to take place upon it.

This, we trust, will explain the operation of that charm which accompanies the effectual preaching of the Gospel. The love of God, and the love of the world, are two affections, not merely in a state of rivalship, but in a state of enmity—and that so irreconcilable, that they can not dwell together in the same bosom. We have already affirmed how impossible it were for the heart, by any innate elasticity of its own, to cast the world away from it, and thus reduce itself to a wilderness. The heart is not so constituted, and the only way to dispossess it of an old affection, is by the expulsive power of a new one. Nothing can exceed the magnitude of the required change in a man's character—when bidden as he is in the New Testament, to love not the world; no, nor any of the things that are in the world—for this so comprehends all that is dear to him in existence, as to be equivalent to a command of self-annihilation. But the same revelation which dictates so mighty an obedience, places within our reach as mighty an instrument of obedience. It brings for admittance, to the very door of our heart, an affection which, once seated upon its throne, will either subordinate every previous inmate, or bid it away. Beside the world, it places before the eye of the mind, Him who made the world, and with this peculiarity, which is all its own—that in the Gospel do we so behold God, as that we may love God. It is there, and there only, where God stands revealed as an object of confidence to sinners—and where our desire after Him is not chilled into apathy, by that barrier of human guilt which intercepts every approach that is not made to Him through the appointed Mediator. It is the bringing in of this better hope, whereby we draw nigh unto God—and to live without hope, is to live without God, and if the heart be without God, the world will then have all the ascendency. It is God apprehended by the believer as God in Christ, who alone can dispost it from this ascendency. It is when He stands dismantled of the terrors which belong to Him as an offended lawgiver, and when we are enabled by faith, which is His own gift, to see His glory in the face of Jesus Christ, and to hear His beseeching voice, as it protests good-will to men, and entreats the return of all who will to a full pardon, and a gracious acceptance—it is then, that a love paramount to the love of the world, and at length expulsive of it, first arises in the regenerating bosom. It is when released from the spirit of bondage, with which love can not dwell, and when admitted into the number of God's children, through the faith that is in Christ Jesus, the spirit of adoption is poured upon us—it is then that the heart, brought under the mastery of one great and predominant affection, is delivered from the tyranny of its former desires, and in the only way in which deliverance is possible. And that faith which is revealed to us from heaven, as indispensable to a sinner's justification in the sight of God, is also the instrument of the greatest of all moral and spiritual achievements on a nature dead to the influence, and beyond the reach of every other application.

Thus may we come to perceive what it is that makes the most effective kind of preaching. It is not enough to hold out to the world's eye the mirror of its own imperfections. It is not enough to come forth with a demonstration, however pathetic, of the evanescent character of all its enjoyments. It is not enough to travel the walk of experience along with you, and speak to your own conscience, and your own recollection of the deceitfulness of the heart, and the deceitfulness of all that the heart is set upon. There is many a bearer of the Gospel-message, who has not shrewdness or natural discernment enough, and who has not power of characteristic description enough, and who has not the talent of moral delineation enough, to present you with a vivid and faithful sketch of the existing follies of society. But that very corruption which he has not the faculty of representing in its visible details, he may practically be the instrument of eradicating in its principle. Let him be but a faithful expounder of the Gospel testimony. Unable as he may be to apply a descriptive hand to the character of the present world, let him but report with accuracy the matter which revelation has brought to him from a distant world—unskilled as he is in the work of so anatomizing the heart, as with the power of a novelist to create a graphical or impressive exhibition of the worthlessness of its many affections—let him only deal in those mysteries of peculiar doctrine, on which the best of novelists have thrown the wantonness of their derision. He may not be able, with the eye of shrewd and satirical observation, to expose to the ready recognition of his hearers the desires of worldliness—but with the tidings of the Gospel in commission, he may wield the only engine that can extirpate them. He can not do what some have done, when, as if by the hand of a magician, they have brought out to view, from the hidden recesses of our nature, the foibles and lurking appetites which belong to it. But he has a truth in his possession, which into whatever heart it enters, will, like the rod of Aaron swallow up them all; and unqualified as he may be, to describe the old man in all the nicer shading of his natural and constitutional varieties, with him is deposited that ascendant influence under which the leading tastes and tendencies of the old man are destroyed, and he becomes a new creature in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let us not cease, then, to ply the only instrument of powerful and positive operation, to do away from you the love of the world. Let us try every legitimate method of finding access to your hearts for the love of Him who is greater than the world. For this purpose, let us, if possible, clear away that shroud of unbelief which so hides and darkens the face of the Deity. Let us insist on his claims to your affection—and whether in the shape of gratitude, or in the shape of esteem, let us never cease to affirm, that in the whole of that wondrous economy, the purpose of which is to reclaim a sinful world unto Himself—He, the God of love, so sets Himself forth in characters of endearment, that naught but faith, and naught but understanding, are wanting, on your part, to call forth the love of your hearts back again.

And here let me advert to the incredulity of a worldly man; when he brings his own sound and secular experience to bear upon the high doctrines of Christianity—when he looks on regeneration as a thing impossible—when feeling as he does, the obstinacies of his own heart on the side of things present, and casting an intelligent eye, much exercised perhaps in the observation of human life, on the equal obstinacies of all who are around him, he pronounces this whole matter about the crucifixion of the old man, and the resurrection of a new man in his place, to be in downright opposition to all that is known and witnessed of the real nature of humanity. We think that we have seen such men, who, firmly trenched in their own vigorous and home-bred sagacity, and shrewdly regardful of all that passes before them through the week, and upon the scenes of ordinary business, look on that transition of the heart by which it gradually dies unto time, and awakens in all the life of a new-felt and ever-growing desire toward God, as a mere Sabbath speculation; and who thus, with all their attention engrossed upon the concerns of earthliness, continue unmoved, to the end of their days, among the feelings, and the appetites, and the pursuits of earthliness. If the thought of death, and another state of being after it, comes across them at all, it is not with a change so radical as that of being born again, that they ever connect the idea of preparation. They have some vague conception of its being quite enough that they acquit themselves in some decent and tolerable way of their relative obligations; and that, upon the strength of some such social and domestic moralities as are often realized by him in whose heart the love of God has never entered, they will be transplanted in safety from this world, where God is the Being with whom it may almost be said, that they have had nothing to do, to that world where God is the Being with whom they will have mainly and immediately to do throughout all eternity. They admit all that is said of the utter vanity of time, when taken up with as a resting-place. But they resist every application made upon the heart of man, with the view of so shifting its tendencies, that it shall not henceforth find in the interests of time, all its rest and all its refreshment. They, in fact, regard such an attempt as an enterprise that is altogether aerial—and with a tone of secular wisdom, caught from the familiarities of everyday experience, do they see a visionary character in all that is said of setting our affections on the things that are above; and of walking by faith; and of keeping our hearts in such a love of God as shall shut out from them the love of the world; and of having no confidence in the flesh; and of so renouncing earthly things as to have our conversation in heaven.

Now, it is altogether worthy of being remarked of those men who thus disrelish spiritual Christianity, and, in fact, deem it an impracticable acquirement, how much of a piece their incredulity about the demands of Christianity, and their incredulity about the doctrines of Christianity, are with one another. No wonder that they feel the work of the New Testament to be beyond their strength, so long as they hold the words of the New Testament to be beneath their attention. Neither they nor any one else can dispossess the heart of an old affection, but by the impulsive power of a new one—and, if that new affection be the love of God, neither they nor any one else can be made to entertain it, but on such a representation of the Deity, as shall draw the heart of the sinner toward Him. Now it is just their belief which screens from the discernment of their minds this representation. They do not see the love of God in sending His Son into the world. They do not see the expression of His tenderness to men, in sparing Him not, but giving Him up unto the death for us all. They do not see the sufficiency of the atonement, or of the sufferings that were endured by Him who bore the burden that sinners should have borne. They do not see the blended holiness and compassion of the Godhead, in that He passed by the transgressions of His creatures, yet could not pass them by without an expiation. It is a mystery to them, how a man should pass to the state of godliness from a state of nature—but had they only a believing view of God manifest in the flesh, this would resolve for them the whole mystery of godliness. As it is they can not get quit of their old affections, because they are out of sight from all those truths which have influence to raise a new one. They are like the children of Israel in the land of Egypt, when required to make bricks without straw—they can not love God, while they want the only food which can aliment this affection in a sinner's bosom—and however great their errors may be both in resisting the demands of the Gospel as impracticable, and in rejecting the doctrines of the Gospel as inadmissible, yet there is not a spiritual man (and it is the prerogative of him who is spiritual to judge all men) who will not perceive that there is a consistency in these errors.

But if there be a consistency in the errors, in like manner is there a consistency in the truths which are opposite to them. The man who believes in the peculiar doctrines, will readily bow to the peculiar demands of Christianity. When he is told to love God supremely, this may startle another, but it will not startle him to whom God has been revealed in peace, and in pardon, and in all the freeness of an offered reconciliation. When told to shut out the world from his heart, this may be impossible with him who has nothing to replace it—but not impossible with him, who has found in God a sure and a satisfying portion. When told to withdraw his affections from the things that are beneath, this were laying an order of self-extinction upon the man, who knows not another quarter in the whole sphere of his contemplation, to which he could transfer them —but it were not grievous to him whose view had been opened to the loveliness and glory of the things that are above, and can there find, for every feeling of his soul, a most ample and delighted occupation. When told to look not to the things that are seen and temporal, this were blotting out the light of all that is visible from the prospect of him in whose eye there is a wall of partition between guilty nature and the joys of eternity—but he who believes that Christ has broken down this wall, finds a gathering radiance upon his soul, as he looks onward in faith to the things that are unseen and eternal. Tell a man to be holy—and how can he compass such a performance, when his alone fellowship with holiness is a fellowship of despair? It is the atonement of the cross reconciling the holiness of the lawgiver with the safety of the offender, that hath opened the way for a sanctifying influence into the sinner's heart, and he can take a kindred impression from the character of God now brought nigh, and now at peace with him. Separate the demand from the doctrine, and you have either a system of righteousness that is impracticable, or a barren orthodoxy. Bring the demand and the doctrine together, and the true disciple of Christ is able to do the one, through the other strengthening him. The motive is adequate to the movement; and the bidden obedience to the Gospel is not beyond the measure of his strength, just because the doctrine of the Gospel is not beyond the measure of his acceptance. The shield of faith, and the hope of salvation, and the Word of God, and the girdle of truth—these are the armor that he has put on; and with these the battle is won, and the eminence is reached, and the man stands on the vantage ground of a new field and a new prospect. The effect is great, but the cause is equal to it—and stupendous as this moral resurrection to the precepts of Christianity, undoubtedly is, there is an element of strength enough to give it being and continuance in the principles of Christianity.

The object of the Gospel is both to pacify the sinner's conscience, and to purify his heart; and it is of importance to observe, that what mars the one of these objects, mars the other also. The best way of casting out an impure affection, is to admit a pure one; and by the love of what is good, to expel the love of what is evil. Thus it is, that the freer the Gospel, the more sanctifying is the Gospel; and the more it is received as a doctrine of grace, the more will it be felt as a doctrine according to godliness. This is one of the secrets of the Christian life, that the more a man holds of God as a pensioner, the greater is the payment of service that He renders back again. On the tenure of "Do this and live," a spirit of fearfulness is sure to enter; and the jealousies of a legal bargain chase away all confidence from the intercourse between God and man; and the creature striving to be square and even with his Creator, is in fact, pursuing all the while his own selfishness instead of God's glory; and with all the conformities which he labors to accomplish, the soul of obedience is not there, the mind is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed under such an economy ever can be. It is only when, as in the Gospel, acceptance is bestowed as a present, without money and without price, that the security which man feels in God is placed beyond the reach of disturbance—or that he can repose in Him as one friend reposes in another—or that any liberal and generous understanding can be established betwixt them—the one party rejoicing over the other to do him good—the other finding that the truest gladness of his heart lies in the impulse of a gratitude by which it is awakened to the charms of a new moral existence. Salvation by grace—salvation by free grace—salvation not of works, but according to the mercy of God—salvation on such a footing is not more indispensable to the deliverance of our persons from the hand of justice, than it is to the deliverance of our hearts from the chill and the weight of ungodliness. Retain a single shred or fragment of legality with the Gospel, and you raise a topic of distrust between man and God. You take away from the power of the Gospel to melt and to conciliate. For this purpose the freer it is the better it is. That very peculiarity which so many dread as the germ of Antinomianism, is, in fact, the germ of a new spirit and a new inclination against it. Along with the light of a free Gospel does there enter the love of the Gospel, which, in proportion as you impair the freeness, you are sure to chase away. And never does the sinner find within himself so mighty a moral transformation, as when under the belief that he is saved by grace, he feels constrained thereby to offer his heart a devoted thing, and to deny ungodliness.

To do any work in the best manner, you would make use of the fittest tools for it. And we trust that what has been said may serve in some degree for the practical guidance of those who would like to reach the great moral achievement of our text, but feel that the tendencies and desires of nature are too strong for them. We know of no other way by which to keep the love of the world out of our heart than to keep in our hearts the love of God—and no other way by which to keep our hearts in the love of God, than by building ourselves on our most holy faith. That denial of the world which is not possible to him that dissents from the Gospel testimony, is possible, even as all things are possible to him that believeth. To try this without faith, is to work without the right tool or the right instrument. But faith worketh by love; and the way of expelling from the heart the love that transgresseth the law, is to admit into its receptacles the love which fulfilleth the law.

Conceive a man to be standing on the margin of this green world, and that, when he looked toward it, he saw abundance smiling upon every field, and all the blessings which earth can afford, scattered in profusion throughout every family, and the light of the sun sweetly resting upon all the pleasant habitations, and the joys of human companionship brightening many a happy circle of society—conceive this to be the general character of the scene upon one side of his contemplation, and that on the other, beyond the verge of the goodly planet on which he was situated, he could descry nothing but a dark and fathomless unknown. Think you that he would bid a voluntary adieu to all the brightness and all the beauty that were before him upon earth, and commit himself to the frightful solitude away from it? Would he leave its peopled dwelling-places, and become a solitary wanderer through the fields of nonentity? If space offered him nothing but a wilderness, would he for it abandon the home-bred scenes of life and of cheerfulness that lay so near, and exerted such a power of urgency to detain him? Would not he cling to the regions of sense, and of life, and of society?—and shrinking away from the desolation that was beyond it, would not he be glad to keep his firm footing on the territory of this world, and to take shelter under the silver canopy that was stretched over it?

But if, during the time of his contemplation, some happy island of the blest had floated by, and there had burst upon his senses the light of its surpassing glories, and its sounds of sweeter melody, and he clearly saw that there a purer beauty rested upon every field, and a more heartfelt joy spread itself among all the families, and he could discern there a peace, and a piety, and a benevolence which put a moral gladness into every bosom, and united the whole society in one rejoicing sympathy with each other, and with the beneficent Father of them all. Could he further see that pain and mortality were there unknown, and above all, that signals of welcome were hung out, and an avenue of communication was made for him—perceive you not that what was before the wilderness, would become the land of invitation, and that now the world would be the wilderness? What unpeopled space could not do, can be done by space teeming with beatific scenes, and beatific society. And let the existing tendencies of the heart be what they may to the scene that is near and visible around us, still if another stood revealed to the prospect of man, either through the channel of faith, or through the channel of his senses—then, without violence done to the constitution of his moral nature, may he die unto the present world, and live to the lovelier world that stands in the distance away from it.

DISCOURSE SIXTY-FOURTH.

EDWARD IRVING, M.A.

Irving was born at Annan, in 1792, and completed his studies at the University of Edinburg. After having spent several years in teaching, he determined on the ministry as a profession. Dr. Chalmers, on hearing him preach, was so impressed with his abilities that he appointed him his assistant at St. John's Church, Glasgow. In 1823 he was appointed preacher at Caledonian Asylum, in Cross-street, Hatton Garden, London; where such crowds flocked to hear him as to render it necessary to procure tickets of admission, even for "standing room." Becoming acquainted with Mr. Drummond, he joined "the prophets," as they were called; for which, in 1830, he was charged with "heresy," by the Scotch Church in London, and finally deposed by the Presbytery to which he was attached. He continued to preach, however, until the time of his death, in 1834. He died repeating the twenty-third Psalm in the original Hebrew. A sect sprung up about the time of his death, called *Irvingites.*

This remarkable man, who thus went down to his grave under a cloud, has been pronounced the most eloquent man of our century. As an orator he has been compared to Demosthenes, Luther, and Paul; and as a poet, to Milton. Such men as McIntosh, Canning, Brougham, and Coleridge, have rendered admiring homage to his genius. It was a most remarkable combination of powers, physical, moral, and mental, that won his unprecedented popularity. Irving has left a discourse on "Missions," "Babylon and Infidelity Foredoomed of God," and some other works. His "*Orations on the Oracles of God*," are among his chief productions, and have a world-wide reputation. The *first* of these (that which we have selected) has been most admired. There are passages in it of almost unrivaled beauty and sublimity.

PREPARATION FOR CONSULTING THE ORACLES OF GOD.

"Search the Scriptures."—John, v. 39.

There was a time when each revelation of the word of God had an introduction into this earth, which neither permitted men to doubt whence it came, nor wherefore it was sent. If at the giving of each several truth a star was not lighted up in heaven, as at the birth of the Prince of Truth, there was done upon the earth a wonder, to make her children listen to the message of their Maker. The Almighty made bare His arm; and, through mighty acts shown by His holy servants, gave demonstration of His truth, and found for it a sure place among the other matters of human knowledge and belief.

But now the miracles of God have ceased, and nature, secure and unmolested, is no longer called on for testimonies to her Creator's voice. No burning bush draws the footsteps to His presence-chamber; no invisible voice holds the ear awake; no hand cometh forth from the obscurity to write His purposes in letters of flame. The vision is shut up, and the testimony is sealed, and the word of the Lord is ended, and this solitary Volume, with its chapters and verses, is the sum total of all for which the chariot of heaven made so many visits to the earth, and the Son of God Himself tabernacled and dwelt among us.

The truth which it contains once dwelt undivulged in the bosom of God; and, on coming forth to take its place among things revealed, the heavens and the earth, and nature, through all her chambers, gave it reverent welcome. Beyond what it contains, the mysteries of the future are unknown. To gain it acceptation and currency, the noble company of martyrs testified unto the death. The general assembly of the first-born in heaven made it the day-star of their hopes, and the pavilion of their peace. Its every sentence is charmed with the power of God, and powerful to the everlasting salvation of souls.

Having our minds filled with these thoughts of the primeval divinity of revealed Wisdom when she dwelt in the bosom of God, and was of His eternal Self a part, long before He prepared the heavens, or set a compass upon the face of the deep; revolving also, how, by the space of four thousand years, every faculty of mute Nature did solemn obeisance to this daughter of the divine mind, whenever He pleased to commission her forth to the help of mortals; and further meditating upon the delights which she had of old with the sons of men, the height of heavenly temper to which she raised them and the offspring of magnanimous deeds which these two—the wisdom of God, and the soul of man—did engender between themselves—meditating, I say, upon these mighty topics, our soul is smitten with grief and shame to remark how in this latter day, she hath fallen from her high estate; and fallen along with her the great and noble character of men. Or if there be still a few names, as of the missionary martyr, to emulate the saints of old—how to the commonalty of Christians her oracles have fallen into a household commonness, and her visits into a cheap familiarity; while by the multitude she is mistaken for a minister of terror sent to oppress poor mortals with moping melancholy, and inflict a wound upon the happiness of human kind.

For there is now no express stirring up the faculties to meditate her high and heavenly strains—there is no formal sequestration of the mind from all other concerns, on purpose for her special entertainment—there is no house of solemn seeking and solemn waiting for a spiritual frame, before entering and listening to the voice of the Almighty's wisdom. Who feels the sublime dignity there is in a saying, fresh descended from the porch of heaven? Who feels the awful weight there is in the least iota that hath dropped from the lips of God? Who feels the thrilling fear of trembling hope there is in words whereon the destinies of himself do hang? Who feels the swelling tide of gratitude within his breast, for redemption and salvation coming, instead of flat despair and everlasting retribution? Finally, who, in perusing the word of God, is captivated through all His faculties, and transported through all His emotions, and through all His energies of action wound up? Why, to say the best, it is done as other duties are wont to be done; and, having reached the rank of a daily, formal duty, the perusal of the Word hath reached its noblest place. Yea, that which is the guide and spur of all duty, the necessary aliment of Christian life, the first and the last of Christian knowledge, and Christian feeling hath, to speak the best, degenerated in these days to stand rank and file, among those duties whereof it is parent, preserver, and commander. And, to speak not the best, but the fair and common truth, this Book, the offspring of the Divine mind, and the perfection of heavenly wisdom, is permitted to lie from day to day, perhaps from week to week, unheeded and unperused, never welcome to our happy, healthy, and energetic moods; admitted, if admitted at all, in seasons of sickness, feeble-mindedness, and disabling sorrow. Yea, that which was sent to be a spirit of ceaseless joy and hope within the heart of man, is treated as the enemy of happiness, and the murderer of enjoyment; and eyed askance, as the remembrancer of death, and the very messenger of hell.

Oh! if books had but tongues to speak their wrongs, then might this Book well exclaim—Hear, O heavens! and give ear, O earth! I came from the love and embrace of God, and mute Nature, to whom I brought no boon, did me rightful homage. To men I come and my words were to the children of men. I disclosed to you the mysteries of hereafter, and the secrets of the throne of God. I set open to you the gates of salvation, and the way of eternal life, hitherto unknown. Nothing in heaven did I withhold from your hope and ambition; and upon your earthly lot I poured the full horn of Divine providence and consolation. But ye requited me with no welcome, ye held no festivity on my arrival: ye sequester me from happiness and heroism, closeting me with sickness and infirmity: ye make not of me, nor use me for, your guide to wisdom and prudence, put me into a place in your last of duties, and withdraw me to a mere corner of your time; and most of ye set me at naught and utterly disregard me. I come, the fullness of the knowledge of God; angels delighted in my company, and desired to dive into my secrets. But ye, mortals, place masters over me, subjecting me to the discipline and dogmatism of men, and tutoring me in your schools of learning. I came, not to be silent in your dwellings, but to speak welfare to you and to your children. I came to rule, and my throne to set up in the hearts of men. Mine ancient residence was the bosom of God; no residence will I have but the soul of an immortal; and if you had entertained me, I should have possessed you of the peace which I had with God, "when I was with Him and was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him. Because I have called you and ye have refused, I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they cry upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me."

From this cheap estimation and wanton neglect of God's counsel, and from the terror of this curse consequent thereon, we have resolved, in the strength of God, to do our endeavor to deliver this congregation of His intelligent and worshiping people—an endeavor which we make with a full reception of the difficulties to be overcome on every side, within no less than without the sacred pale; and upon which we enter with the utmost diffidence of our powers, yet with the full purpose of straining them to the utmost, according to the measure with which it hath pleased God to endow our mind. And do thou, O Lord, from whom cometh the perception of truth, vouchsafe to Thy servant an unction from Thine own Spirit, who searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God; and vouchsafe to Thy people "the hearing ear and the understanding heart, that they may hear and understand, and their souls may live!"

Before the Almighty made His appearance upon Sinai, there were awful precursors sent to prepare His way; while He abode in sight, there were solemn ceremonies and a strict ritual of attendance; when He departed, the whole camp set itself to conform unto His revealed will. Likewise, before the Saviour appeared, with His better law, there was a noble procession of seers and prophets, who decried and warned the world of His coming; when He came there were solemn announcements in the heavens and on the earth: He did not depart without due honors; and then followed, on His departure, a succession of changes and alterations which are still in progress, and shall continue in progress till the world's end. This may serve to teach us, that a revelation of the Almighty's will make demand for these three things, on the part of those to whom it is revealed: *A due preparation for receiving it; a diligent attention to it while it is disclosing; a strict observance of it when it is delivered.*

In the whole book of the Lord's revelations, you shall search in vain for one which is devoid of these necessary parts. Witness the awe-struck Isaiah, while the Lord displayed before him the sublime pomp of His presence; and, not content with overpowering the frail sense of the prophet, dispatched a seraph to do the ceremonial of touching his lip with hallowed fire, all before He uttered one word into his astonished ear. Witness the majestic apparition to Saint John, in the Apocalypse, of all the emblematical glory of the Son of Man, allowed to take silent effect upon the apostle's spirit, and prepare it for the revelation of things to come. These heard with all their absorbed faculties, and with all their powers addressed them to the bidding of the Lord. But, if this was in aught flinched from, witness, in the persecution of the prophet Jonah, the fearful issues which ensued. From the presence of the Lord he could not flee. Fain would he have escaped to the uttermost parts of the earth; but in the mighty waters the terrors of the Lord fell upon him; and when engulfed in the deep, and entombed in the monster of the deep, still the Lord's word was upon the obdurate prophet, who had no rest, not the rest of the grave, till he had fulfilled it to the very uttermost.

Now, judging that every time we open the pages of this holy book, we are to be favored with no less than a communication from on high, in substance the same as those whereof we have detailed the three distinct and several parts, we conceive it due to the majesty of Him who speaks, that we, in like manner, discipline our spirits with a due preparation, and have them in a proper frame, before we listen to the voice; that, while it is disclosing to us the important message, we be wrapt in full attention; and that, when it hath disburdened itself into our opened and enlarged spirits, we proceed forthwith to the business of its fulfillment, whithersoever and to whatseover it summon us forth. Upon each of these three duties, incumbent upon one who would not forego the benefit of a heavenly message, we will discourse apart, addressing ourselves in this discourse to the *first*-mentioned of the three.

The preparation for the announcement.—"When God uttereth His voice," says the Psalmist, "coals of fire are kindled; the hills melt down like wax; the earth quakes; and deep proclaims itself unto hollow deep." These sensible images of the Creator have now vanished, and we are left alone, in the deep recesses of the meditative mind, to discern his coming forth. No trump of heaven now speaketh in the world's ear. No angelic conveyancer of Heaven's will taketh shape from the vacant air; and, having done his errand, retireth into his airy habitation. No human messenger putteth forth his miraculous hand to heal Nature's unmedicable wounds, winning for his words a silent and astonished audience. Majesty and might no longer precede the oracles of Heaven. They lie silent and unobtrusive, wrapped up in their little compass, one Volume among many, innocently handed to and fro, having no distinction but that in which our mustered thoughts are enabled to invest them. The want of solemn preparation and circumstantial pomp, the imagination of the mind hath now to supply. The presence of the Deity, and the authority of His voice, our thoughtful spirits must discern. Conscience must supply the terrors that were wont to go before Him; and the brightness of His coming, which the sense can no longer behold, the heart, ravished with His word, must feel.

For the solemn vocation of all her powers, to do her Maker honor and give Him welcome, it is, at the very least, necessary that the soul stand absolved from every call. Every foreign influence or authority arising out of the world, or the things of the world, should be burst when about to stand before the Fountain of all authority; every argument, every invention, every opinion of man forgot, when about to approach to the Father and oracle of all intelligence. And as subjects, when their honors, with invitations, are held disengaged, though preoccupied with a thousand appointments, so, upon an audience, fixed and about to be holden with the King of kings, it will become the honored mortal to break loose from all thralldom of men and things, and be arrayed in liberty of thought and action to drink in the rivers of His pleasure, and to perform the commission of His lips.

Now far otherwise it hath appeared to us, that Christians as well as worldly men come to this most august occupation of listening to the word of God; preoccupied and prepossessed, inclining to it a partial ear, a straitened understanding, and a disaffected will.

The Christian public are prone to preoccupy themselves with the admiration of those opinions by which they stand distinguished as a Church or sect from other Christians, and instead of being quite unfettered to receive the whole counsel of the divinity, they are prepared to welcome it no further than it bears upon, and stands with opinions which they already favor. To this pre-judgment the early use of catechisms mainly contributes, which, however serviceable in their place, have the disadvantage of presenting the truth in a form altogether different from what it occupies in the Word itself. In the one it is presented to the intellect chiefly (and in our catechisms to an intellect of a very subtle order), in the other it is presented more frequently to the heart, to the affections, to the imitations, to the fancy, and to all the faculties of the soul. In early youth, which is so applied to with those compilations, an association takes place between religion and intellect, and a divorcement of religion from the other powers of the inner man. This derangement, judging from observation and experience, it is exceeding difficult to put to rights in after-life; and so it comes to pass, that in listening to the oracles of religion, the intellect is chiefly awake, and the better parts of the message—those which address the heart and its affections, those which dilate and enlarge our admiration of the Godhead, and those which speak to the various sympathies of our nature, we are, by the injudicious use of these narrow epitomes, disqualified to receive.

In the train of these comes controversy with his rough voice and unmeek aspect, to disqualify the soul for a full and fair audience of its Maker's word. The points of the faith we have been called on to defend, or which are reputable with our party, assume, in our esteem, an importance disproportionate to their importance in the Word which we come to relish chiefly when it goes to sustain them, and the Bible is hunted for arguments and texts of controversy, which are treasured up for future service. The solemn stillness which the soul should hold before his Maker, so favorable to meditation and rapt communion with the throne of God, is destroyed at every turn by suggestions of what is orthodox and evangelical—where all is orthodox and evangelical; the spirit of such readers becomes lean, being fed with abstract truths and formal propositions; their temper uncongenial, being ever disturbed with controversial suggestions; their prayers undevout recitals of their opinions; their discourse technical announcements of their faith. Intellect, cold intellect, hath the sway over heavenward devotion and holy fervor. Man, contentious man, hath the attention which the unsearchable God should undivided have; and the fine, full harmony of heaven's melodious voice, which, heard apart, were sufficient to lap the soul in ecstasies unspeakable, is jarred and interfered with, and the heavenly spell is broken by the recurring conceits, sophisms, and passions of men. Now truly an utter degradation it is of the Godhead to have His word in league with that of any man, or any council of men. What matter to me whether the Pope, or any work of any mind be exalted to the quality of God? If any helps are to be imposed for the understanding, or safe-guarding, or sustaining of the Word, why not the help of statues and pictures for my devotions? Therefore, while the warm fancies of the Southerns have given their idolatry to the ideal forms of noble art, let us Northerns beware we give not our idolatry to the cold and coarse abstractions of human intellect.

For the preoccupations of worldly minds, they are not to be reckoned up, being manifold as their favorite passions and pursuits. One thing only can be said, that before coming to the oracles of God they are not preoccupied with the expectation and fear of Him. No chord in their heart is in unison with things unseen; no moments are set apart for religious thought and meditation; no anticipations of the honored interview; no prayer of preparation like that of Daniel before Gabriel was sent to teach him; no devoutness like that of Cornelius before the celestial visitation; no fastings like that of Peter before the revelation of the glory of the Gentiles! Now to minds which are not attuned to holiness, the words of God find no entrance, striking heavy on the ear, seldom making way to the understanding, almost never to the heart. To spirits hot with conversation, perhaps heady with argument, uncomposed by solemn thought, but ruffled and in uproar from the concourse of worldly interests, the sacred page may be spread out, but its accents are drowned in the noise which hath not yet subsided in the breast. All the awe, and pathos, and awakened consciousness of a Divine approach, impressed upon the ancients by the procession of solemnities, is to worldly men without a substitute. They have not solicited themselves to be in readiness. In a usual mood, and vulgar frame they come to God's Word as to other compositions, reading it without any active imaginations about Him who speaks; feeling no awe of a sovereign Lord, nor care of a tender Father, nor devotion to a merciful Saviour. Nowise depressed themselves out of their wonted dependence, nor humiliated before the King of kings—no prostrations of the soul, nor falling at His feet as dead—no exclamation, as of Isaiah, "Woe is me, for I am of unclean lips!"—nor suit "Send me,"—nor fervent ejaculation of welcome, as of Samuel, "Lord, speak, for Thy servant heareth!" Truly they feel toward His word much as to the word of an equal. No wonder it shall fail of happy influence upon spirits which have, as it were on purpose, disqualified themselves for its benefits by removing from the regions of thought and feeling which it accords with, into other regions, which it is of too severe dignity to affect, otherwise than with stern menace and direful foreboding! If they would have it bless them and do them good, they must change their manner of approaching it, and endeavor to bring themselves into that prepared, and collected, and reverential frame which becomes an interview with the High and holy One who inhabiteth the praises of eternity.

Having thus spoken without equivocation, and we hope without offense, to the contradictedness and preoccupation with which Christians and worldly men are apt to come to the perusal of the Word of God, we shall now set forth the two master-feelings under which we shall address ourselves to the sacred occupation.

It is a good custom, inherited from the hallowed days of Scottish piety, and in our cottages still preserved, though in our cities generally given up, to preface the morning and evening worship of the family with a short invocation of blessing from the Lord. This is in unison with the practice and recommendation of pious men, never to open the Divine Word without a silent invocation of the Divine Spirit. But no address to Heaven is of any virtue, save as it is the expression of certain pious sentiments with which the mind is full and overflowing. Of those sentiments which befit the mind that comes into conference with its Maker, the first and most prominent should be gratitude for His ever having condescended to hold commerce with such wretched and fallen creatures. Gratitude not only expressing itself in proper terms, but possessing the mind with one abiding and over-mastering mood, under which it shall sit impressed the whole duration of the interview. Such an emotion as can not utter itself in language—though by language it indicate its presence—but keeps us in a devout and adoring frame, while the Lord is uttering His voice.

Go visit a desolate widow with consolation, and help, and fatherhood of her orphan children—do it again and again, and your presence, the sound of your approaching footstep, the soft utterance of your voice, the very mention of your name, shall come to dilate her heart with a fullness which defies her tongue to utter, but speaking by the tokens of a swimming eye, and clasped hands, and fervent ejaculations to Heaven upon your head! No less copious acknowledgment of God, the Author of our well-being, and the Father of our better hopes, ought we to feel when His Word discloseth to us the excess of His love. Though a vail be now cast over the Majesty which speaks, it is the voice of the Eternal which we hear, coming in soft cadences to win our favor, yet omnipotent as the voice of the thunder, and overpowering as the rushing of many waters. And though the vail of the future intervene between our hand and the promised goods, still are they from His lips who speaks and it is done, who commands, and all things stand fast. With no less emotion, therefore, should this Book be opened, than if, like him in the Apocalypse, you saw the voice which spake; or, like him in the trance, you were into the third heaven translated, company and communing with the realities of glory which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived.

Far and foreign from such an opened and awakened bosom, is that cold and formal hand which is generally laid upon the sacred Volume; that unfeeling and unimpressive tone with which its accents are pronounced; and that listless and incurious ear into which its blessed sounds are received. How can you, thus unimpassioned, hold communion with themes in which every thing awful, vital, and endearing meet together! Why is not curiosity, curiosity ever hungry, on edge to know the doings and intentions of Jehovah, King of kings? Why is not interest, interest ever awake, on tip-toe to hear the future destiny of itself? Why is not the heart that panteth over the world after love and friendship, overpowered with the full tide of the Divine acts and expressions of love? Where is nature gone when she is not moved with the tender mercy of Christ? Methinks the affections of men are fallen into the yellow leaf. Of the poets which charm the world's ear, who is he that inditeth a song unto his God? Some will tune their harps to sensual pleasure, and by the enchantment of their genius well-nigh commend their unholy themes to the imagination of saints. Others to the high and noble sentiments of the heart, will sing of domestic joys and happy unions, casting around sorrow the radiancy of virtue, and bodying forth, in undying forms, the short-lived visions of joy! Others have enrolled themselves the high-priests of mute nature's charms, enchanting her echoes with their minstrelsy, and peopling her solitudes with the bright creatures of their fancy. But when, since the days of the blind master of English song, hath any poured forth a lay worthy of the Christian theme? Nor in philosophy, "the palace of the soul," have men been more mindful of their Maker. The flowers of the garden, and the herbs of the field have their unwearied devotees, crossing the ocean, wayfaring in the desert, and making devout pilgrimages to every region of nature for offerings to their patron muse. The rocks, from their residences among the clouds, to their deep rests in the dark bowels of the earth, have a bold and most venturous priesthood, who see in their rough and flinty faces a more delectable image to adore than in the revealed countenance of God. And the political welfare of the world is a very Moloch, who can at any time command his hecatomb of human victims. But the revealed suspense of God, to which the harp of David, and the prophetic lyre of Isaiah were strung, the prudence of God, which the wisest of men coveted after, preferring it to every gift which Heaven could confer, and the eternal intelligence himself in human form, and the unction of the Holy One which abideth—these the common heart of man hath forsaken, and refused to be charmed withal.

I testify, that there ascendeth not from earth a hosannah of her children to bear witness in the ear of the upper regions to the wonderful manifestations of her God! From a few scattered hamlets in a small portion of her territory, a small voice ascendeth, like the voice of one crying in the wilderness. But to the service of our general Preserver there is no concourse from Dan unto Bersheeba, of our people, the greater part of whom, after two thousand years of apostolic commission, have not the testimonies of our God; and the multitude of those who disrespect or despise them!

But, to return from this lamentation, which, may God hear, who doth not disregard the cries of His afflicted people! With the full sense of obligation to the giver, combine a humble sense of your own incapacity to value and to use the gift of His oracles. Having no taste whatever for the mean estimates which are made, and the coarse invectives that are vented against human nature, which, though true in the main, are often in the manner so unfeeling and triumphant, as to reveal hot zeal rather than tender and deep sorrow, we will not give in to this popular strain. And yet it is a truth by experience, revealed, that though there be in man most noble faculties, and a nature restless after the knowledge and truth of things, there are, toward God and His revealed will, an indisposition and a regardlessness, which the most tender and enlightened consciences are the most ready to acknowledge. Of our emancipated youth, who, bound after the knowledge of the visible works of God, and the gratification of the various instincts of nature, how few betake themselves at all, how few absorb themselves with the study and obedience of the word of God! And when, by God's visitation, we address ourselves to the task, how slow is our progress and how imperfect our performance! it is most true that nature is unwilling to the subject of the Scriptures. The soul is previously possessed with adverse interests; the world hath laid an embargo on her faculties, and monopolized them to herself; old habit hath perhaps added to his almost incurable callousness; and the enemy of God and man is skillful to defend what he hath already won. So circumstanced, and every man is so circumstanced, we come to the audience of the word of God, and listen in worse tune than a wanton to a sermon, or a hardened knave to a judicial address. Our understanding is prepossessed with a thousand idols of the world, religious or irreligious—which corrupt the reading of the word into a straining of the text to their service, and when it will not strain, cause it to be skimmed, and perhaps despised or hated. Such a thing as a free and unlimited reception of all parts of the Scripture into the mind, is a thing most rare to be met with, and when met with, will be found the result of many a sore submission of nature's opinions as well as of nature's likings.

But the word, as hath been said, is not for the intellect alone, but for the heart, and for the will. Now if any one be so wedded to his own candor as to think he doth accept the divine truth unabated, surely no one will flatter himself into the belief that his heart is attuned and enlarged for all divine commandments. The man who thus misdeems of himself must, if his opinions were just, be like a sheet of fair paper, unblotted and unwritten on; whereas all men are already occupied, to the very fullness, with other opinions and attachments, and desires than the word reveals. We do not grow Christians by the same culture by which we grow men, otherwise what need of divine revelation, and divine assistance? But being unacquainted from the womb with God, and attached to what is seen and felt, through early and close acquaintance, we are ignorant and detached from what is unseen and unfelt. The word is a novelty to our nature, its truths fresh truths, its affections fresh affections, its obedience gathered from the apprehension of nature and the commerce of worldly life. Therefore there needeth, in one that would be served from this storehouse opened by heaven, a disrelish of his old acquisitions, and a preference of the new, a simple, child-like teachableness, an allowance of ignorance and error, with whatever else beseems an anxious learner. Coming to the word of God, we are like children brought into the conversations of experienced men; and we should humbly listen and reverently inquire; or we are like raw rustics introduced into high and polished life, and we should unlearn our coarseness, and copy the habits of the station; nay we are like offenders caught, and for amendment committed to the bosom of honorable society, with the power of regaining our lost condition and inheriting honor and trust—therefore we should walk softly and tenderly, covering our former reproach with modesty and humbleness, hasting to redeem our reputation by distinguished performances, against offense doubly guarded, doubly watchful for dangerous and extreme positions, to demonstrate our recovered goodness.

These two sentiments—devout veneration of God for His unspeakable gift, and deep distrust of our capacity to estimate and use it aright—will generate in the mind a constant aspiration after the guidance and instruction of a higher power. The first sentiment of goodness remembered, emboldening us to draw near to Him who first drew near to us, and who with Christ will not refuse us any gift. The second sentiment, of weakness remembered, teaching us our need, and prompting us by every interest of religion and every feeling of helplessness to seek of Him who hath said, "If any one lack wisdom let him ask of God, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not." The soul which under these two master-feelings cometh to read, shall not read without profit. Every new revelation feeding his gratitude and nourishing his former ignorance, will confirm the emotions he is under, and carry them onward to an unlimited dimension. Such a one will prosper in the way; enlargement of the inner man will be his portion, and establishment in the truth his exceeding great reward. "In the strength of the Lord shall his right hand get victory—even in the name of the Lord of Hosts. His soul shall also flourish with the fruits of righteousness from the seed of the Word, which liveth and abideth forever."

Thus delivered from prepossessions of all other masters, and arrayed in the raiment of humility and love, the soul should advance to the meeting of her God; and she should call a muster of all her faculties, and have all her poor grace in attendance, and any thing she knows of His excellent works and exalted ways she should summon up to her remembrance: her understanding she should quicken, her memory refresh, her imagination stimulate, her affections cherish, and her conscience arouse. All that is within her should be stirred up, her whole glory should awake and her whole beauty display itself for the meeting of her King. As His hand-maiden she should meet Him; His own handiwork, though sore defaced, yet seeking restoration; His humble, because offending servant—yet nothing slavish, though humble—nothing superstitious, though devout—nothing tame, though modest in her demeanor; but quick and ready, all addressed and wound up for her Maker's will.

How different the ordinary proceeding of Christians, who, with timorous, mistrustful spirits; with an abeyance of intellect, and a dwarfish reduction of their natural powers, enter to the conference of the Word of God! The natural powers of man are to be mistrusted, doubtless, as the willing instruments of the evil one; but they must be honored also as the necessary instruments of the Spirit of God, whose operation is a dream, if it be not through knowledge, intellect, conscience, and action. Now Christians, heedless of the grand resurrection of the mighty instruments of thought and action, at the same time coveting hard after holy attainment, do often resign the mastery of themselves, and are taken into the counsel cf the religious world—whirling around the eddy of some popular leader—and so drifted, I will not say from godliness, but drifted certainly from that noble, manly, and independent course, which, under steerage of the Word of God, they might safely have pursued for the precious interests of their immortal souls. Meanwhile these popular leaders, finding no necessity for strenuous endeavors and high science in the ways of God, but having a gathering host to follow them, deviate from the ways of deep and penetrating thought—refuse the contest with the literary and accomplished enemies of the faith—bring a contempt upon the cause in which mighty men did formerly gird themselves to the combat—and so cast the stumbling-block of a mistaken paltriness between enlightened men and the cross of Christ! So far from this simple-mindedness (but its proper name is feeble-mindedness) Christians should be—as aforetime in this island they were wont to be—the princes of human intellect, the lights of the world, the salt of the political and social state. Till they come forth from the swaddling-bands, in which foreign schools have girt them, and walk boldly upon the high places of human understanding, they shall never obtain that influence in the upper regions of knowledge and power, of which, unfortunately, they have not the apostolic unction to be in quest. They will never be the master and commanding spirit of the time, until they cast off the wrinkled and withered skin of an obsolete old age, and clothe themselves with intelligence as with a garment, and bring forth the fruits of power and love and of a sound mind.

Mistake us not, for we steer in a narrow, very narrow channel, with rocks of popular prejudice on every side. While we thus invocate to the reading of the Word, the highest strains of the human soul, mistake us not as derogating from the office of the Spirit of God. Far be it from any Christian, much further from any Christian pastor, to withdraw from God the honor which is every where His due; but there most of all His due where the human mind labored alone for thousands of years, and labored with no success—viz., the regeneration of itself, and its restoration to the last semblance of the Divinity! Oh! let him be reverently inquired after, devoutly on, and most thankfully acknowledged in every step of progress from the soul's fresh awakening out of his dark, oblivious sleep—even to her ultimate attainment upon earth and full accomplishment for heaven. And that there may be a fuller choir of awakened men to advance His honor and glory here on earth, and hereafter in heaven above; let the saints bestir themselves like angels, and the ministers of religion like archangels strong! And now at length let us have a demonstration made of all that is noble in thought, and generous in action, and devoted in piety, for bestirring this lethargy, and breaking the bonds of hell, and redeeming the whole world to the service of its God and King!

Sketch of the American Pulpit.

THE AMERICAN PULPIT.

The first preaching of a pure gospel on American soil was not in costly temples made with men's hands. It was amid objects more sublime than the creations of human art. As a type of some of those scenes, we may call up the landing of the New England Pilgrims After many vain attempts, the "Mayflower" has touched the icy shore, and discharged her cargo of precious souls. Though in the dead of winter, the chosen spot has in it something inviting to the cold and exhausted voyagers. A few years ago the hand of the Indian had just there removed the trees for growing his corn. A sweet brook runs under the hill-side, and "many a delicate spring of good water as can be drunk." The cannon has been dragged to the top of one of the hills, for their defense, and the ground is being laid out, that the families may be by themselves. Timber has at length been felled for building; but before it could be framed, the last day of the week had come. The setting-sun saw in that secluded spot but a single shed, where the goods might be covered, and the settlers might rest their weary heads. How honored that rude structure. There spent that noble band of pious exiles their first Sabbath on the land. There breathed they forth the first notes of praise and thanksgiving, ere long to ascend from every hill and vale. And there the first Pilgrim preacher, on the 21st day of January, 1621, dispensed to loving and trustful souls the consolations of the Divine word.

Or, let us reproduce the scene of that lovely spring-day Sabbath—the first spent by the newly-arrived settlers before the mouth of the Quinnipiack—in April, 1638. Just yonder lie upon the smooth water two or three small vessels. Here, along the margin of the creek, are a few tents, and some two or three rude huts, with the boxes and luggage that were landed yesterday, piled up around them; and here and there a little column of smoke, going up in the still morning air, shows that the inmates are in motion. Yet all is quiet. Though the sun is up, there is no appearance of labor or business; for it is the Sabbath. By-and-by, the stillness is broken by the beating of a drum; and from the tents and from the vessels, a congregation comes gathering around a spreading oak.

Here are men and women who have been accustomed to the luxuries of wealth in a metropolis, and to the refinements of a court. Here are ministers who have disputed in the Universities, and preached under gothic arches in London. These men and women have come into the wilderness, to face new dangers, to encounter new temptations. They look to God; and words of solemn prayer go up, responding to the murmurs of the woods and of the waves. They sing Psalms to their Maker and Preserver; and for the first time since the creation, the echoes of these hills and waters are wakened by the voice of praise. The word of God is opened, and their faith and hope are strengthened by the remembrance of Him, who once like them was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.*

Amid such scenes, and in places like these, began the preaching of Christ's Gospel in this Western world—scenes and places soon exchanged for the plain but spacious sanctuaries, which in a few generations dotted all parts of the land. Thus were laid the foundations of the AMERICAN PULPIT; for, although there had been settlements here of an earlier date, the glorious institution of preaching was not fairly inaugurated until the times to which we refer.

And the men to whom this honor belongs were not unworthy of their high position, as the "fathers" of the American preachers. The records of the times, their noble deeds, and the institutions upon which they have left their impress, alike attest to their rare endowments. These old Pilgrim and Puritan ministers were made and trained by God to act as master-spirits in the most sublime undertakings. They were men of dauntless *courage* and *invincible faith.* The words upon their banner revealed their confidence and devotion—*Qui transtulit sustinet* —"He who transplanted, sustains."† They were men of *intelligence* and *sound learning.* Most of the preachers who came over with the colonists had been educated in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. They brought with them extensive libraries, and were close students amid all their toils. It is said to have been no uncommon thing for the early New England ministers to read from the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, at the ordinary morning and evening devotions in their families.

In *doctrine*, the Puritans entertained the views of the great Reformers. The form of doctrine which Laud upheld and propagated, they regarded with great dislike; but equally so the mysticism and Antinomianism which, in that age of excitement, broke out in various quarters.‡ Their views were held with firmness, and insisted upon with great earnestness in their preaching. Hence we find their discourses to be, at the same time, both strongly doctrinal and highly practical—insisting alike upon God's sovereignty, and man's duty and accountability.

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* This description of the first Sabbath on the Quinnipiack river is drawn from Bacon's "Historical Discourses." The sermon preached by Davenport on the occasion, was from Matt. iv. 1, on "The temptation in the wilderness." The place is now New Haven.

† The motto upon the arms of Connecticut.

‡ Hooker's great sermon on the "Activity of Faith," is a sufficient confirmation.

The *mode of worship* which they introduced was not materially unlike that which is now generally adopted. About nine o'clock the people came together at the blowing of a horn or the beating of a drum. The pastor began with a solemn prayer, about a quarter of an hour in length. The teacher then read and expounded a chapter. Then a Psalm was sung, the lines being given out by the ruling elder. After that, the pastor delivered his sermon, not written out in full, at least not in all cases, but from notes enlarged upon in speaking. In some churches, it was customary for the congregation to arise while the preacher read his text, as a token of reverence for the word of God. After the sermon, the teacher concluded with prayer and a blessing. In the afternoon the same order was observed, but the sermon was generally preached by the teacher instead of the pastor.*

The *method of sermonizing* was, first to unfold the text historically and critically; then raise from it a "doctrine;" then bring forward the "proofs," either inferential or direct; then illustrate and justify it to the understanding by the "reasons" drawn from the philosophy of the subject, or the nature of things; and finally, conclude with an "*improvement*" by the way of "uses" or inferences, and timely "admonitions" and "exhortations." These applications, or uses and exhortations, often formed the greater part of the discourse. In some cases they were made under the different heads, as the preacher progressed in his discourse. It was a frequent practice to preach two or more sermons on the same text; and to discuss the subject "negatively" and "affirmatively." Nor were the preachers particularly cautious about "long sermons" (and the same was true of the hearers), but spoke on till they had completely exhausted the subject, even though the last sands of the hour-glass had already fallen out.

The general *character of their sermons* was such as might have been expected from men described by Hubbard and Higginson, as "Timothies, in their houses, Chrysostoms in their pulpits, and Augustines in their disputations;" and from the sagacity and intelligence of the congregations to whom they preached. None but an able ministry would have been tolerated. "It is as unnatural," said one of the men of these times, "for a right New England man to live without an able ministry, as for a smith to work his iron without a fire."

The demand which these shrewd and intelligent congregations made upon their ministers was very great; and lest their energies should be overtaxed and lose their necessary vigor and elasticity, it was arranged that every congregation, as a general rule, should have two preachers, who should share in the toil, and be mutual helpers to their own improvement and that of the flock. As a result, the pulpit productions of the Puritans, though often marred by the faults of their age, were generally of a decidedly superior order. The sermons of some of these old preachers, which have come down to us, for cogency of reasoning, and freshness, and depth of thought, and flashing illustration, and fervent appeal, and rousing, thrilling application, are rarely excelled in the discourses of any country or time.

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* See Bacon's "Historical Discourses," pp. 45, 46.

But the very greatness of the Puritan divines became the occasion of serious harm. Such were their superior talents and attainments, and such was the deference felt for their opinions, that nothing was attempted without their counsel and advice. They were, virtually, the heads of the people. In civil things as well as sacred, they were consulted; and matters generally took shape according to their views. Now it so occurred that, with all their lofty qualities, these excellent men were not entirely perfect. They were not wholly free from the errors and false biases of the times. Far in advance of most men of their age, they had not, nevertheless, fully worked out their master-principles to their legitimate results. They held to the *rights of conscience;* and for these rights they had contended and struggled in the land that gave them birth; but they had failed to perceive the bearings of this doctrine, and that the complete disseverance of things civil from things spiritual, was essential to a due respect for the moral sense of each individual.

Ignorance or misconception at this point, in many cases, is a matter of small moment; but in this instance it proved fatal. When the Massachusetts colony was in trouble about settling the affairs of the Church and the Commonwealth, John Cotton, a tower of strength, was asked to preach a sermon before the general court. The text he chose was Haggai, ii 4: "Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel," etc., and on hearing his discourse, "all obstructions were presently removed, and the spirits of all sorts, as *one man*, were excited unanimously." The court believed that the people were "to be governed conformably to the law of God;" and desired Mr. Cotton "to draw an abstract of the judicial laws delivered from God by Moses." This he did, "advising them to persist in establishing a *Theocracy* (*i. e.* God's government) over God's people. The court followed his advice; and so "Moses and Aaron rejoiced and kissed each other in the mount of God."*

A law was passed that "no persons should be admitted to the freedom of the body politic, but such as were members of some of the churches within its limits."

In like manner, when the foundations of the New Haven Colony were to be laid, "all the free planters met in Mr. Newman's barn," and Mr. Davenport preached to them a sermon on the words "Wisdom hath builded her house," etc.; after which they "unanimously voted that the Scriptures do hold forth a perfect rule for the direction and government of men in all duties, as well in families and commonwealths, as in matters of the Church." Upon Mr. Davenport's recommendation, it was also voted, that "free burgesses shall be chosen out of the Church members; they that are in the foundation work of the Church, being actually free burgesses; and to choose to themselves out of the like estate of Church-fellowship, and the power of choosing magistrates, etc., and the business of like nature are to be transacted by these free burgesses."*

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* See "Life of John Cotton," by Norton, pp. 46, 47, whence the citations are drawn.

This fashioning of the Commonwealth to the setting forth of God's house, as Mr. Cotton styled it, was certainly with the commendable design of founding "such civil order as might best conduce to the securing of the purity and peace of the ordinances to themselves and their posterity according to God." But it was the parent evil of every unjustifiable procedure, and of many of those disasters which subsequently befell the ministry and the churches. Out of it grew those instances of persecution for opinion's sake which tarnish the bright pages of early American history. And out of it, as a main source, sprang that wonderful and well-nigh universal defection in the pulpits and the congregations of New England.

This inevitable degeneracy began to appear within the first half century of the colonies' existence. As early as 1660–70 we find complaints of the decay of piety. In 1677 the support of the ministry in Connecticut was transferred from the churches to the *town;* and some one, generally one of the deacons, was chosen to "make up the rate and appoint the delivery of it to the ministers, and to prosecute such as fail in the payment." The fact is indicative of at least a lack of that warmth of affection for those then serving in the pulpit, which was at first apparent, and of the decline of the power of religion.

About this time the theology of the New England ministry seems to have undergone a change most unfavorable to vital godliness. The preaching was less pointed and earnest in its bearings upon the impenitent, and less marked by a deep evangelical spirit. Ministerial duty, as a whole, became perfunctory and inefficient; the result almost of necessity incident upon making the minister, when once settled, independent of his people. In 1702, Dr. Increase Mather, in a work entitled "The Glory Departing from New England," says, "Look into the pulpits, and see if there is such a glory there as once there was. New England has had her teachers, eminent for learning, and no less eminent for holiness and all ministerial accomplishments. There are ministers who are not like their predecessors, nor principled, nor spiritual as they were. How many churches, how many towns are there in New England, that we may sigh over them and say *the glory is departed!*"

There is too much reason to believe that about this time, many of the ministers were not even converted men. We say *many*, for the remark is by no means true of the clergy as a whole. All through this lamentable declension, might have been found eminent and godly servants of the Most High, who bewailed the prevailing corruption, and longed for the days of old. But, although to be taken with some grains of allowance, the assertions of Whitfield, about 1740, and of Gilbert Tennent* and others, leave little room to doubt that a large number of the occupants of the pulpits, had not felt the influence of Divine grace upon their own hearts. It is not surprising that this should have been the case. With men who cared little for religion (and theirs was the predominating influence), it was enough that the preacher possessed education and talents. They gave him their support all the more readily, because he delivered pleasant moral essays rather than Gospel sermons. The preachers of these times are described as, for the most part, "grave men in speculation, orthodox, or moderately so, who went the customary round of ministerial duties with a good degree of regularity; but whose preaching lacked point, earnestness, application. Their devotional services lacked warmth and spirituality; their people slumbered and they slumbered with them, and an aspect of moral desolation and death, was spread over the congregations and churches where they labored."†

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* Bacon's "Historical Discourses," pp. 20–22.

We have alluded to a single cause by which this lamentable state of things was induced—the unnatural alliance between the Church and the State. There were several other causes which powerfully tended to this result; some of which need not be named. We glance at two or three of the more prominent; adopting, as a concise statement, the narrative given in the work last cited. Referring to this blending of things spiritual with things temporal, the learned author observes that, "It held out a sort of premium for hypocrisy. For all who wished to enjoy the privilege of freemen, would of course determine to become members of the Church; and as this could be permitted only on a profession of piety, they would be strongly tempted tc make such a profession without the requisite qualifications. Those, on the other hand, who had too much conscience to do this, or who having applied for admission to the Church, were rejected, would of course be decidedly opposed to the existing order of the churches, and exert all their influence to overthrow it. They deeply felt the privations to which they were subjected; and as they considered them wholly unjust and oppressive, they loudly complained of them, and as early as 1646, petitioned not only the courts of the Colonies, but the British Parliament, praying, as they say, in 'behalf of thousands,' that they might enjoy with others the rights and privileges of freemen.

"In the mean time the ministers and churches sympathizing with this class of men in the disabilities under which they labored, were strongly inclined to extend relief to them. The proper way of doing this was to abolish the law which they had so unwisely enacted. But this was deemed sacred. In these embarrassing circumstances, a powerful temptation was presented to *lower* the terms of the admission to the Church, and to receive persons to communion on slight and insufficient evidence of piety. The result was, that not a few, as we have reason to believe, were early introduced into the churches who, though in the main correct in sentiment and moral in conduct, were strangers to the power of godliness, and averse to the duties of strict religion. Their influence was like an incubus on the vitals of the Church. It tended to depress the tone of piety, and to infuse a spirit of formality and worldliness into the services of religion.

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* He preached a sermon from Mark, vi. 34, "On the Danger of an Unconverted Ministry."

† See a "Tribute to the Memory of the Pilgrims," by Joel Hawes, D.D., Hartford, Conn., pp. 153, 154.

"The next cause to be specified was the introduction of the *half-way covenant.* This strange anomaly in religion sprung from the law, the mischief of which I have just described. From natural increase and emigration from abroad, the class of persons in the Colonies, not qualified to profess religion, soon became numerous. Many of these were highly respectable for their talents and general worth of character; and it was felt to be a hardship that they should be deprived of the privileges enjoyed by others around them, and especially that they should be denied the right of baptism for their children, which they had always enjoyed in their native land. To obviate these difficulties was the object of the half-way covenant. It provided that all persons of sober life and correct sentiments, without being examined as to a change of heart, might profess religion, or become members of the Church, and have their children baptized, though they did not come to the Lord's table. The plan originated in Connecticut. It was formally discussed and adopted at a meeting of ministers in Boston, in 1657, and ratified anew in all in its essential features, by a general synod in 1662.

"This mischievous measure, however, was from the first strongly opposed by many of the most eminent ministers in the country, and by a still larger number of the churches; and in this state it was not adopted by a single church till 1696. But it afterward prevailed extensively throughout New England, and wherever it did prevail, the consequences were eminently unhappy. Great numbers came forward to own the covenant, as it was called, and had their children baptized, but very few joined the Church in full communion, or partook of the sacrament; satisfied with being half way in the Church, and enjoying a part of its privileges, they settled down in a state of dull and heartless formality; and felt little or no concern respecting their present condition or future prospects. They had found a place within the pale of the visible Church, which, while it relieved them from the necessity of repentance and a life of holy obedience, quieted them in their sins, and gave them a comfortable but deceitful hope of heaven. By receiving into covenant connection such numbers of unsanctified persons, the moral energy of the churches was destroyed; their distinctive character, as holy communities, was swept away; the discipline of the Gospel could no longer be maintained; nor the doctrines nor the duties of the Gospel be preached and enforced with that clearness and directness which are requisite to give them effect on the heart and life.

"This state of things prepared the way for another step in the progress of decline. About the year 1700, Mr. Stoddard, a distinguished minister of Northampton, inferred, with apparent justness, that those who in virtue of their covenant connection with the Church, had a right to receive baptism for their children, had an equal right to the Lord's Supper. This led him on to another conclusion, that the Lord's Supper is among the appointed means of regeneration; *a converting ordinance;* that all persons ought to come to this ordinance, for the same reason that they ought to attend public worship, or read the Bible; and consequently that a profession of piety is not to be required as a qualification for communion in the Church. This doctrine, like the half-way covenant, was at first far from being generally approved either by the ministers or churches. It was regarded as a dangerous innovation, and as directly opposed to the principles and practice of almost all the churches in New England. The matter was publicly controverted between Mr. Stoddard and Dr. Increase Mather of Boston. But 'owing to Mr. Stoddard's great influence over the people of Northampton, it was introduced there; and by degrees it spread very much among ministers and people in that country, and in other parts of New England.'

"The great principle adopted by the pilgrims in the organization of their churches, and by which alone their purity could be preserved, was now gone. Piety was no longer regarded as an essential qualification for membership in the Church. Unconverted persons, those who knew themselves to be such, were received as members of the spiritual body of Christ, and admitted without examination or restraint, to the special, sealing ordinances of the Gospel. This practice 'brought in the first great apostacy of the Christian Church;' and wherever it was adopted in New England, the influence was deplorable. The churches in which it prevailed ceased to be, even in profession, societies of sanctified persons; and composed of a strange mixture of the holy with the unholy, they soon lost their vital energies, and sunk into a state of great formality and coldness.

"As another cause of decline, I venture to mention the custom of supporting religion by law. The ministers of New England were at first supported by voluntary contributions, usually made at the close of public service on the Sabbath, but this method being found inconvenient and defective, a law was early passed, requiring all to pay for the support of the Gospel in proportion to their property. This law, with some modifications, continued in force for more than a hundred and fifty years, and while the country was thinly settled, and the people were nearly all of the same denomination, the law, it can not be doubted, was productive of much good. It secured to the community a much greater amount of religious instruction than could have been expected from mere voluntary associations for the support of the Gospel, but that the good was counterbalanced by no small amount of evil, can not, I think, be reasonably questioned. The law, especially in its earliest provisions, did in fact create a religious establishment. It recognized the Congregational churches as the established churches of the State, and secured to them the special patronage and support of the civil power. What then should prevent the churches of New England from experiencing, at least in some measure, the disastrous effects which have always resulted from ecclesiastical establishments? The ministers and churches lay recumbent on the civil arm, and slumbered in a deceitful security, derived from the protection and support of law. They did not feel their dependence on God, as they would in other circumstances, nor pray, nor act with that humility and decision in promoting the cause of religion which they would have had under a due impression of the great truth *that salvation is only of the Lord.*"

Such was the state of things at the period under review. The American pulpit had lost its original might. The ministers had not yet renounced the creed of their fathers, but though in the main orthodox in sentiment, and upright in life, they were greatly deficient in the spirit and power of their holy profession. "Their fault was not so much that they preached *error*, as that they did not preach the *truth*—at least not with that discrimination and force which were necessary to give it effect in the conversion and moral improvement of man."

With the opening of the year 1735, it pleased the Lord to begin to pour out His Spirit in a wonderful manner. The work of grace commenced in Northampton, where the celebrated Jonathan Edwards was then laboring. Its immediate occasion seems to have been a series of sermons which he preached on the doctrine of justification by faith.* It soon extended into the adjacent region, spreading even to many of the towns in Connecticut. It began in Boston in 1740, and in that and the three following years, prevailed in more than one hundred and fifty congregations in New England, and some of the Middle and Southern States, to a great extent through the powerful preaching of George Whitfield, who arrived in Philadelphia in November, 1739, and began to preach in New England in September, 1740. It is estimated that in two or three years of the revival thirty or forty thousand souls were converted in New England alone.† In that part of the country one hundred and fifty Congregational churches were formed within twenty years. The number of Presbyterian ministers had increased from forty-five to one hundred, saying nothing of the Baptists, and some other denominations, which at this time began greatly to increase.

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* "Faithful Narrative," pp. 36, 37.

† Trumbull's History of Connecticut, vol. ii., p. 8.

In the progress of this great awakening many ministers were soundly converted, and the majority of those already pious were quickened to new life. Not to speak of the more prominent preachers in these glorious times, such as Edwards, and Prince, and the Tennents, and Davies, it is certain that the ministry as a whole, was highly effective, as compared with the past. What is perhaps more important, it reformed the public opinion as to the right of a man to enter the sacred office before he had given evidence of a positive change of heart. It established also the doctrine of justification by faith—the doctrine, as says Luther, by which a Church must stand or fall.

After continuing for some years, this great attention to the subject of religion gradually subsided, and the American pulpits and churches, instead of reflecting the sunshine of heaven, were destined to be again enveloped in thick shadows. A different set of unfavorable influences now began to operate. Prominent among these were the *excesses* which had characterized in some instances, the progress of the great revival. One way which Satan has of *undoing*, is by *overdoing*. In the ministry of that day there were those whose zeal outran their knowledge. Puffed up with success, they denounced as "dumb dogs" those who could not endorse all their views and measures, and by this means widened the already existing breach between different ministers as to the matter of revivals, and brought a reproach upon the Christian profession. A large number of ministers and churches, because of this rampant fanaticism, took a permanent and decided stand against special religious awakenings, and those doctrines which are generally blessed of God in producing them—a circumstance which supplied points of connection for the approaching departure from the faith which is in Jesus.

Then came the French war and the war of the Revolution; the first of which lasted from 1755 to 1763. During this period, the public mind was called off from religion, and absorbed with the safety and interests of the nation. In the mean time, a multitude of foreign officers and soldiers overspread the land, whose corrupt principles and poisonous sentiments sowed the seeds of irreligion and infidelity. The war of the Revolution, also, not only engrossed the attention of all classes, but resulted in the complete initiation of thousands into the mysteries of French philosophy, with whom the very name of religion became a scoff and a by-word. It was, for the time being, specially disastrous upon the Churches, whose houses of worship were often burned or turned into barracks or stables; and upon the ministers, against whom, from their known influence, the malice of the hostile forces was particularly directed. It does not seem surprising that, in such an age, religion declined and a frost settled upon the pulpit. In 1785 the number of parishes in Boston was actually less than half a century before.

It was during the time of this divided state of the churches, this decay of piety, and this unsettled condition of political affairs (and partly as a direct result), that the views of a large portion of the New England clergy ripened into positive Unitarianism. Indications of a veering from the doctrine of the Divine Trinity, as usually held, may be seen at least as far back as a quarter of a century previous to the close of the Revolutionary struggle. *Freedom of inquiry* began to be the theme of general praise. *Creeds* were becoming objects of suspicion. The distinguishing doctrines of the Scriptures were touched lightly, or alluded to as the deep things of God, which the Spirit of God alone can search out, and about which, if mentioned at all, it is not well to be wise above that which is written.*

An edition of Emlyn's "Humble Inquiry"—an elaborate attack upon the Deity of the Redeemer—appeared in Boston, 1756. Bellamy, in 1760, speaks of the remodeling of the Shorter Catechism in New Hampshire, "even to omit the Trinity;" and of a "celebrated doctor of divinity at the head of a large party in Boston, boldly ridiculing the doctrine of the Trinity, and denying the doctrine of justification by faith alone."

In 1787 the first Unitarian congregation was formed in America, gathering around James Freeman, in Boston, as their pastor. In 1789 Freeman, in a letter to Belsham, the leader of Socinianism in England, observed that there were "many churches in which the worship was strictly Unitarian." A few years later, writing to the same individual, he said he knew "a number of ministers, particularly in the Southern part of Massachusetts, who avowed and publicly preached the Unitarian doctrine; while others contented themselves with leading their hearers, by a course of rational and prudent sermons, gradually and insensibly to embrace it."

From time to time. earnest words were spoken in high places, defending the ancestral faith, and admonishing all of the "rapid current which, without a breath of air, was wafting them away." But men of shining talents were rising up to preach with "charming accents" a more *liberal* Gospel, and draw after them the multitude; while death was dismantling, one by one, the few towers of strength on which yet floated the banner of the Pilgrims. In the mean while, the vacant professorship of divinity in Harvard College, founded by Hollis, a London merchant, at once a Calvinist and a Baptist, for the support of a professor "of sound orthodox principles," was filled by a man distinguished for his supposed and undisclaimed Unitarianism, which gave rise to the retiring of one of the indignant professors, and caused to rage more madly than before the sea of strife. In 1810 the presidency of the college was given to one who was a fine scholar, but who spurned whatever was mysterious in religion, and opened his academic career by attending a ball which was given by the students. Dr. Dwight did not hesitate to say of Boston this same year, that "Unitarianism seemed to be the predominating system." A few years later, but two churches in that city adhered to the orthodox standard. But it is to be observed that here was its chief seat; for, according to the best data, the Unitarian ministers of all Massachusetts were not more than seventy-five, while the orthodox were more than two hundred. It should also be borne in mind, that this wonderful change in doctrinal belief was, at this time, almost wholly confined to the New England States.

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* See Eliot's Ordination Sermon in 1754.

The preaching of the period now brought under review was remarkable for other peculiarities besides its *doctrinal* aspect, properly so called. At first, it dropped out, by degrees, the clear annunciation of those principles of revelation which are repugnant to the natural heart, and became smooth and deceptive. Truth, instead of being set forth in a bold, explicit manner, was dealt out *cautiously*, and was softened down, or concealed, lest it should excite opposition. Sermons were barren of evangelical sentiment and feeling; and if doctrines were preached, they were not presented in their fullness, and in their legitimate bearings, so as to arouse the heart and the conscience, and humble the sinner in the dust before God. How natural the next step—to regard these doctrines as of little practical importance—and the next, wholly to reject them! Of course, there were many and brilliant exceptions; but, to a wide extent, the pulpit, at the time of which we speak, taught chiefly those lessons of morality which are founded upon such general truths of natural religion, and such facts of evangelical history, as had never been questioned by any one claiming the name of a Christian. Indeed, it dared not venture much further; for the fear lest *freedom of thought* should be fettered, and lest something should be received which could not be *fully comprehended*, had so long operated as to destroy the sense of certainty in the interpretation of the Scriptures, and lead to the simple exposition of the rules of upright life, and the acknowledged truths of revelation.

But we turn with pleasure to the brighter side of the American pulpit. The defection which we have traced was not suffered to go forward without powerful counteracting influences. The first of the influences which we name, was a glorious revival of religion; beginning in 1790, in Dr. Baldwin's church, Boston; and soon spreading into Dr. Stillman's, and thence into Rev. Mr. Thacher's, and many other congregations. In the year 1795 Dr. Dwight came to the presidency of Yale College. From that time, the churches began to be conversant with a higher order of preaching. The young men, who took upon themselves the mold of their instructor, were soon upon the stage, exerting their elevating influence. The sermons and lectures of President Dwight upon the evidences and doctrines of revelation, did much to dissipate the thick and heavy atmosphere of doubt, and reveal the temple of truth as unshaken as ever, in spite of the fearful assaults of error. The Spirit of God also came down upon the college and the surrounding churches, anointing afresh and greatly multiplying the ministers of salvation, and awakening an evangelical spirit in every direction. The sentiments of Roger Williams, as to the entire freedom of the churches from civil connection and control, had come to be generally adopted. Shortly after the Revolution, the union of Church and State in the *Southern* States—the *Episcopal* having been the established order—came to an end. It was brought about, mainly, by the Baptists and Presbyterians, aided by Jefferson. The separation was not *complete* in *Connecticut* until 1818; and in *Massachusetts* not until 1833. It is also worthy of note that an orthodox Magazine, the "Panoplist," had arisen—and, at a later date, the "Spirit of the Pilgrims"—and was doing faithful service in the cause of truth. The Theological Seminary at Andover, also, had sprung into being; and the muffled step of the innovating bands had felt itself compelled to halt, as if it had stumbled, all at once, on the unseen outposts of a hidden battalion. Just at this time, too, a few young Elijahs had "prayed into existence the embryo of American missions," and in 1810 declared their intention to go far hence to the Gentiles. The founding of the different boards of missions and other benevolent institutions—the glory of our age—was as the resurrection of the ministers and churches to a new existence.

From that day to this, the American pulpit has rapidly gained in efficiency. Fervor, intelligence, and life, began to breathe through the ministrations of the sanctuary. With the disruption in the New England churches, when each pastor took a distinct position, either on the side of the Orthodox, or of Unitarians, came additional strength. Many a hard battle was afterward fought by the champions of the two systems, but generally with the result of revealing a wider distinction between their views, and making it more apparent that the real question at issue was, whether *revealed* or *natural* religion was to be our guide and hope. Meanwhile, the great heart of the community, unsatisfied with a religion of cold and barren generalities, was panting to see once more, "the reconciling cross and the incarnate God." Age, and change, and death had plucked away many of the jewels that glittered in the crown of the liberal religion, and the congregations of the evangelical belief increased, while those of the opposite faith decayed. Preaching became, year by year, more thoroughly Biblical and powerful in its character. There was less of time-serving, and lax accommodation: and far more of that clearness and force, that cogency of argument, and closeness and fervency of appeal, which is blessed to the building up of the churches in holiness and purity and love.

The present number of ministers, actually engaged in preaching, in the United States, in connection with the different Evangelical denominations, is upward of twenty-eight thousand. They are thus distributed: Protestant Episcopal, one thousand seven hundred and fifty-two; Congregational, one thousand eight hundred and forty-eight; Baptist, eight thousand five hundred and twenty-five; Presbyterian, Old and New school, including also the Reformed Dutch, Associate and Cumberland Presbyterians, German Reformed, etc., five thousand nine hundred and forty-one; Methodist, in the several branches, eight thousand three hundred and eighty-nine. The Moravians, Mennonites, etc., include also, many faithful preachers. The number of Unitarian clergymen, at the present time, is about two hundred and sixty.*

The American clergy, as a body, are laborious, earnest, intelligent, faithful, and God-fearing men. In no country is the ministry more respected or more influential. There never was a more groundless assertion than that of a foreign Journal, which charged them with being "timid, backward, time-serving, self-exiled, and blind to their noble mission."† There is, doubtless, room for improvement. In the opinion of some, so far as the great object of preaching is concerned, the American pulpit is not on the advance, but on the other hand, becoming more inefficient. All will agree that a more deeply spiritual, self-forgetful, urgent, effective ministry is loudly called for. But if the essentials of good preaching are instructiveness, warmth, energy, dignity, boldness, tenderness, pathos, chaste language, and high spirituality, then is the pulpit of the United States, as a whole, second to that of no country on the globe. Every thing favors such preaching. Our Academic, Collegiate, and Theological Institutions take rank with the best of those in other countries; so that ministers need not be deficient in sound learning. The incubus of no State-church establishment hangs upon us. Our common schools educate the public mind and render necessary an intelligent ministry. The instincts of the American people, and the genius of our free institutions, tend to freedom of inquiry and a wide range of knowledge. The masses read, and inquire, and investigate, and discuss, and vote, and make laws, and think for themselves. That the pulpit influences *such* a people is proof of its power.

The *style* of preaching is far from uniform. The planters of New England, as before remarked, did not, ordinarily, write out in full their discourses, though this was often the case. The custom became more common in after-years among the Congregational churches, where it has since almost universally obtained. With the ministers of the Presbyterian, Reformed Dutch, and Episcopalian churches, the habit of fully writing out their discourses also prevails. With those of the Baptist denomination it is becoming quite common, especially in the New England and Middle States. The Methodist clergy almost universally adhere to the extemporaneous form of address. The expository method of sermonizing, though often practiced, does not prevail in this country, to the extent that could be desired. The habit of distributing the subject into its natural parts, and announcing the heads and divisions, is very general.

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* We have adopted the statistics of Dr. Baird, in his statement as to Religion in America, made to the Evangelical Alliance in Paris, 1855. He includes among the Baptist ministers some fifteen hundred who are not properly so called. He also does not embrace in the Methodists, some twelve thousand "local preachers," and eight hundred superannuated ministers. In all the denominations there are many ministers not engaged in preaching: such as professors, editors, secretaries, etc.

† British and Foreign Magazine, 1840.

The preaching of the American pulpit may be said to be rather practical and experimental than doctrinal. The formal discussion of Scripture doctrines is certainly less frequent at the present time, than in the age of the Puritans, and during the first quarter of this century. The argumentative feature, partly by consequence, is also less prominent. But the American school of pulpit eloquence is less oratorical, imaginative, and impassioned than that of the German or French, though far more solid and instructive. It patterns somewhat closely to the English and Scottish school; where passion is thought to be uncalled for, or at least not essential, since religion is powerful and majestic of itself, and needs only to be explained to the understanding. This is true, however, of the preaching of some denominations to a far greater extent than of others. Perfection lies, we should say, in the blending of the warmth, brilliancy, energy, and pathos of the French and German style, with the solidity, depth, and masculine strength of the Scottish and English school. Perhaps it is not presumption to say, that the pulpit of no country approximates more nearly to this standard of excellence, than the American.

The pulpit of the United States is already rich in the productions which it has given to the world. Recent as is its date, it has afforded many examples of the highest order of preaching. In the sermons of the men of no age or country, are to be found finer models of pure classic style, of manly eloquence, of sober, instructive thought, and of earnest appeals, adapted to arouse the conscience of the transgressor, or warm the heart of the believer, than in the discourses of Edwards, and Davies, and Emmons, and Dwight, and Buckminster, and Maxcy, and Griffin, and Olin, and Mason, and Bedell, and others, not to name any of the divines now living. It should also be observed that many eloquent preachers have left little or nothing behind them in the form of printed sermons.

In all that adorns the character of the servants of Jesus Christ; in all that ensures the approbation of God, and the power of the Divine Spirit; and in all that sanctifies, enriches and elevates the race, may the future of the American pulpit be not unworthy of the past!

DISCOURSE SIXTY-FIFTH.

THOMAS HOOKER.

The "father of the Connecticut churches" was born about the year 1580, in Marfield, Leicestershire, England, and educated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. After teaching and preaching some time with great success, he was silenced for non-conformity, and in 1630 was obliged to flee to Holland. In 1633, he came to New England in company with Mr. Cotton and Mr. Stone, and settled at first, near Boston, Massachusetts. In 1636, he removed with a few others to a fertile spot on the banks of the Connecticut river, which they called Hartford; having traveled through the wilderness with no other guide than a compass. Here he had great influence in establishing the colony. He died in 1647. Some of his sermons were sent to England and published.

Cotton Mather, in his "Magnalia," calls Hooker "the Light of the Western churches; and the pillar of the Connecticut colony." His preaching, he says, "was notably set off with a liveliness extraordinary." Judging from the few specimens of his preaching which we have seen, we should estimate his powers as quite remarkable. His language is pure Saxon, and his style clear, direct, and convincing. The first part of the sermon we have selected, where he proves his subject *negatively*, is omitted from its very great length. It is copied from an old volume of his sermons, bearing date, London, 1651. It reminds one of Baxter.

THE ACTIVITY OF FAITH; OR, ABRAHAM'S IMITATORS.

"And the father of circumcision to them who are not of circumcision only, but also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had, being yet uncircumcized."—Romans, iv. 12.

I proceed now to show who those are, that may, and do indeed, receive benefit as Abraham did. The text saith, "They that walk in the steps of that faith of Abraham:" that man that not only enjoyeth the privileges of the Church, but yieldeth the obedience of faith, according to the Word of God revealed, and walketh in obedience, *that* man alone shall be blessed with faithful Abraham.

Two points may be here raised, but I shall hardly handle them both; therefore I will pass over the first only with a touch, and that lieth closely couched in the text.

That *Faith causeth fruitfulness in the hearts and lives of those in whom it is.*

Mark what I say, a faithful man, is a fruitful man; faith enableth a man to be doing. Ask the question, by what power was it whereby Abraham was enabled to yield obedience to the Lord? The text answereth you, "They that walk in the footsteps" not of Abraham, but "in the footsteps of the faith of Abraham." A man would have thought the text should have run thus: They that walk in the footsteps of Abraham. That is true, too, but the apostle had another end; therefore he saith, "They that walk in the footsteps of *the faith* of Abraham," implying, that it was the grace of faith that God bestowed on Abraham, that quickened and enabled him to every duty that God required of him, and called him to the performance of. So that I say, the question being, whence came it that Abraham was so fruitful a Christian, what enabled him to do and to suffer what he did? surely it was *faith* that was the cause that produced such effects, that helped him to perform such actions. The point then you see is evident, faith is it that causeth fruit.

Hence it is, that of almost all the actions that a Christian hath to do, faith is still said to be the worker. If a man pray as he should, it is "the prayer of faith." If a man obey as he should, it is the obedience of faith. If a man war in the Church militant, it is "the fight of faith." If a man live as a Christain and holy man, he "liveth by faith." Nay, shall I say yet more, if he did as he ought, "he dieth by faith." "These all died in faith." What is that? The power of faith that directed and ordered them in the cause of their death, furnished them with grounds and principles of assurance of the love of God, made them carry themselves patiently in death. I can say no more, but with the apostle, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith." Why doth not the apostle say, Examine whether faith be in you, but "whether ye be in the faith?" His meaning is, that as a man is said to be in drink, or to be in love, or to be in passion, that is, under the command of drink, or love, or passion; so the whole man must be under the command of faith (as you shall see more afterward). If he prays, faith must indite his prayer; if he obey, faith must work; if he live, it is faith that must quicken him; and if he die, it is faith that must order him in death. And wheresoever faith is, it will do wonders in the soul of that man where it is, it can not be idle; it will have *footsteps*, it sets the whole man on work; it moveth feet, and hands, and eyes, and all parts of the body. Mark how the apostle disputeth: "We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken, we also believe, and therefore speak." The faith of the apostle, which he had in his heart, set his tongue a going. If a man have faith within, it will break forth at his mouth. This shall suffice for the proof of the point; I thought to have pressed it further, but if I should, I see the time would prevent me.

The use, therefore, in a word, is this: if this be so, then it falleth foul, and is a heavy bill of indictment against many that live in the bosom of the Church. Go thy ways home, and read but this text, and consider seriously but this one thing in it: That whosever is the son of Abraham, hath faith, and whosoever hath faith, is a walker, is a marker; by the footsteps of faith you may see where faith hath been. Will not this, then, I say, fall marvelous heavy upon many souls that live in the bosom of the Church, who are confident, and put it out of all question, that they are true believers, and make no doubt but what they have faith? But look to it, wheresoever faith is, it is fruitful. If thou art fruitless, say what thou wilt, thou hast no faith at all. Alas, these idle drones, these idle Christians, the Church is too full of them! Men are continually hearing, and yet remain fruitless and unprofitable; whereas if there were more faith in the world, we should have more work done in the world; faith would set feet, and hands, and eyes, and all on work. Men go under the name of professors, but alas! they are but pictures; they stir not a whit; mark, where you found them in the beginning of the year, there you shall find them in the end of the year, as profane, as worldly, as loose in their conversations, as formal in duty as ever. And is this faith? O! faith would work other matters, and provoke a soul to other passages than these.

But you will say, may not a man have faith, and not that fruit you speak of? May not a man have a good heart to Godward, although he can not find that ability in matter of fruitfulness?

My brethren, be not deceived; such an opinion is a mere delusion of Satan; wherever faith is it bringeth Christ into the soul; mark that, "Whosoever believeth, Christ dwelleth in his heart by faith. And if Christ be in you," saith the apostle, "the body is dead, because of sin, but the spirit is life, because of righteousness." If

Christ be in you, that is, whosoever believeth in the Lord Jesus, Christ dwells in such a man by faith; now if Christ be in the soul, the body can not be dead; but a man is alive, and quick, and active to holy duties, ready, and willing, and cheerful in the performance of whatsoever God requireth, Christ is not a dead Saviour, nor the Spirit a dead Spirit: the second Adam is made a quickening spirit. And wherever the spirit is, it works effects suitable to itself. The spirit is a spirit of purity, a spirit of zeal, and where it is it maketh pure and zealous. When a man will say he hath faith, and in the mean time can be content to be idle and unfruitful in the work of the Lord, can be content to be a dead Christian, let him know that his case is marvelously fearful: for if faith were in him indeed it would appear; ye can not keep your good hearts to yourselves; wherever fire is it will burn, and wherever faith is it can not be kept secret. The heart will be enlarged, the soul quickened, and there will be a change in the whole life and conversation, if ever faith takes place in a man. I will say no more of this, but proceed to the second point arising out of the affirmative part.

You will say, what fruit is it then? Or how shall a man know what is the true fruit of faith, indeed, whereby he may discern his own estate? I answer, the text will tell you: "He that walketh in the footsteps of that faith of Abraham." By *footsteps* are meant the works, the actions, the holy endeavors of Abraham; and where those footsteps are there is the faith of Abraham. So that the point of instruction hence is thus much (which indeed is the main drift of the apostle),

That, *Every faithful man may, yea doth imitate the actions of faithful Abraham.*

Mark what I say; I say again, this is to be the son of Abraham, not because we are begotten of him by natural generation, for so the Jews are the sons of Abraham; but Abraham is our father because he is the pattern for the proceeding of our faith. "Thy father was an Amorite," saith the Scripture: that is, thou followest the steps of the Amorites in thy conversation. So is Abraham called the "father of the faithful," because he is the copy of their course, whom they must follow in those services that God calleth for. So the point is clear, every faithful man may, yea doth, and must imitate the actions of faithful Abraham. It is Christ's own plea, and He presseth it as an undeniable truth upon the hearts of the Scribes and Pharisees, that bragged very highly of their privileges and prerogatives, and said, "Abraham is our father." No, saith Christ, "If ye were Abraham's children ye would do the works of Abraham."

To be like Abraham in constitution, to be one of his blood, is not that which makes a man a son of Abraham, but to be like him in holiness of affection, to have a heart framed and a life disposed answerably to his. The apostle in like manner presseth this point when he would provoke the Hebrews, to whom he wrote, to follow the examples of the Saints: "Whose faith (says he) follow, considering the end of their conversation." So the Apostle Peter presseth the example of Sarah upon all good women: "Whose daughter ye are (saith he) as long as ye do well."

For the opening of the point, and that ye may more clearly understand it, a question here would be resolved, what were "the footsteps of the faith of Abraham?" which way went he? This is a question, I say, worthy the scanning, and therefore (leaving the further confirmation of the point, as being already evident enough) I will come to it that so you may know what to pitch and settle your hearts upon.

I answer, therefore, there are six footsteps of the faith of Abraham, which are the main things wherein every faithful man must do as Abraham did, in the work of faith—I mean in his ordinary course; for if there be any thing extraordinary no man is bound to imitate him therein; but in the works of faith, I say, which belongeth to all men, every man must imitate Abraham in these six steps, and then he is in the next door to happiness, the very next neighbor, as I may say, to heaven.

The first step which Abraham took in the ways of grace and happiness, you shall observe to be a yielding to the call of God. Mark what God said to Abraham: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee; and Abraham departed," saith the text, "as the Lord had spoken unto him," even when he was an idolater; he is content to lay aside all and let the command of God bear the sway; neither friends, nor kindred, nor gods can keep him back, but he presently stoopeth to the call of God. So it is, my brethren, with every faithful man. This is his first step: he is contented to be under the rule and power of God's command. Let the Lord call for him, require any service of him, his soul presently yieldeth, and is content to be framed and fashioned to God's call, and returneth an obedient answer thereto; he is content to come out of his sins, and out of himself, and to receive the impressions of the Spirit. This is that which God requireth, not only of Abraham, but of all believers: "Whosoever will be my disciple (saith Christ) must forsake father, and mother, and children, and houses, and lands; yea, and he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." This is the first step in Christianity, to lay down our own honors, to trample upon our own respects, to submit our necks to the block, as it were, and whatever God commands, to be content that His good pleasure should take place with us. * * *

The next step that Abraham, and so every faithful soul, sets forward, is this: that whenever faith cometh powerfully into the heart, the soul is not content barely to yield to the command of God, but it breatheth after His mercy, longeth for His grace, prizeth Christ and salvation above all things in the world, is satisfied and contented with nothing but with the Lord Christ, and although it partake of many things below, and enjoy abundance of outward comforts, yet it is not quieted till it rest and pitch itself upon the Lord, and find and feel that evidence and assurance of his love, which He hath promised unto and will bestow on those who love Him. As for all things here below, he hath but a slight, and mean, and base esteem of them. This you shall see apparent in Abraham. "Fear not, Abraham (saith God), I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." What could a man desire more? One would think that the Lord makes a promise here large enough to Abraham, "I will be thy buckler, and exceeding great reward." Is not Abraham contented with this? No; mark how he pleadeth with God: "Lord God (saith he), what wilt Thou give me, seeing I go childless?" His eye is upon the promise that God had made to him of a son, of whom the Saviour of the world should come. "Oh Lord, what wilt Thou give me?" as if he had said, What wilt Thou do for me? alas! nothing will do my soul good unless I have a son, and in him a Saviour. What will become of me so long as I go childless, and so Saviourless, as I may so speak? You see how Abraham's mouth was out of taste with all other things, how he could relish nothing, enjoy nothing in comparison of the promise, though he had otherwise what he would, or could desire. Thus must it be with every faithful man. That soul never had, nor never shall have Christ, that doth not prize Him above all things in the world. * * *

The third step of Abraham's faith was this, he casteth himself and flingeth his soul, as I may say, upon the all-sufficient power and mercy of God for the attainment of what he desireth; he rolleth and tumbleth himself, as it were, upon the all-sufficiency of God. This you shall find in Rom. iv. 18, there saith the apostle, speaking of Abraham, who "against hope, believed in hope;" that is, when there was no hope in the world, yet he believed in God, even above hope, and so made it possible. It was an object of his hope, that it might be in regard of God, howsoever there was no possibility in regard of man. So the text saith, "he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb, but was strong in faith." He cast himself wholly upon the precious promise and mercy of God.

This, then, is the third step of true justifying faith, that when the believer is informed touching the excellency of the Lord Jesus, and that fullness that is to be had in Him, though he can not find the sweetness of His mercy, though he can not or dare not apprehend and apply it to himself, though he find nothing in himself, yet he is still resolved to rest upon the Lord, and to stay himself on the God of his salvation, and to wait for His mercy till he find Him gracious to his poor soul. Excellent and famous is the example of the woman of Canaan. When Christ, as it were, beat her off, and took up arms against her, was not pleased to reveal Himself graciously to her for the present, "I am not sent (saith He), but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to the dogs:" mark how she replied, "Truth, Lord, I confess all that; yet notwithstanding, the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table." Oh, the excellency, and strength, and work of her faith! She comes to Christ for mercy, He repelleth her, reproacheth her, tells her she is a dog; she confesseth her baseness, yet is not discouraged for all that, but still resteth upon the goodness and mercy of Christ, and is mightily resolved to have mercy whatsoever befalleth her. Truth, Lord, I confess I am as bad as Thou canst term me, yet I confess, too, that there is no comfort but from Thee, and though I am a dog, yet I would have crumbs. Still she laboreth to catch after mercy, and to lean and to bear herself upon the favor of Christ for the bestowing thereof upon her. So it must be with every faithful Christian in this particular; he must roll himself upon the power, and faithfulness, and truth of God, and wait for His mercy, (I will join them both together for brevity's sake, though the latter be a fourth step and degree of faith); I say he must not only depend upon God, but he must wait upon the Holy One of Israel.

The fifth step of Abraham's faith appeared in this; He counted nothing too dear for the Lord; he was content to break through all impediments, to pass through all difficulties, whatsover God would have, he had of Him. This is the next step that Abraham went; and this you shall find when God put him upon the trial. The text saith there "that God did tempt Abraham," did try what he would do for Him, and He bade him, "Go, take thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and slay him;" and straight Abraham went and laid his son upon an altar, and took a knife, to cut the throat of his son—so that Abraham did not spare his son Isaac, he did not spare for any cost, he did not dodge with God in this case; if God would have any thing, He should have it, whatsoever it were, though it were his own life, for no question Isaac was dearer to him than his own life. And this was not his case alone, but the faithful people of God have ever walked the same course. The Apostle Paul was of the same spirit, "I know not (saith he) the things that shall befall me, save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying, that bonds and afflictions abide me: but none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." O blessed spirit! here is the work of faith. Alas! when we come to part with any thing for the cause of God, how hardly comes it from us! "But I (saith he) pass not, no, nor is my life dear unto me." Here, I say, is the work of faith, indeed, when a man is content to do any thing for God, and to say if imprisonment, loss of estate, liberty, life, come, I pass not, it moveth me nothing, so I may finish my course with comfort. Hence it was that the saints of God in those primitive times "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods." Methinks I see the saints there reaching after Christ with the arms of faith, and how, when any thing lay in their way, they were content to lose all, to part with all to have Christ. Therefore saith Saint Paul, "I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." Mark, rather than he would leave his Saviour, he would leave his life, and though men would have hindered him, yet was resolved to have Christ, howsoever, though he lost his life for Him. Oh, let me have my Saviour, and take my life!

The last step of all is this: when the soul is thus resolved not to dodge with God, but to part with any thing for Him, then in the last place there followeth a readiness of heart to address man's self to the performance of whatsoever duty God requireth at his hands; I say this is the last step, when, without consulting with flesh and blood, without hammering upon it, as it were, without awkwardness of heart, there followeth a prestness to obey God, the soul is at hand. When Abraham was called "Behold (saith he) here I am." And so Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth," and so Annias, "Behold, I am here, Lord." The faithful soul is not to seek, as an evil servant that is gone a roving after his companions, that is out of the way when his master would use him, but is like a trusty servant that waiteth upon his master, and is ever at hand to do his pleasure. So you shall see it was with Abraham, when the Lord commanded him to go out of his country, "he obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went;" he went cheerfully and readily, though he knew not whither; as who should say, if the Lord calls, I will not question, if He command I will perform, whatever it be. So it must be with every faithful soul—we must blind the eye of carnal reason, resolve to obey, though heaven and earth seem to meet together in a contradiction, care not what man or what devil saith in this case, but what God will have done, do it; this is the courage and obedience of faith. See how Saint Paul, in the place before named, flung his ancient friends from him, when they came to cross him in the work of his ministry. They all came about him, and because they thought they should see his face no more, they besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, "What mean ye to weep, and to break my heart?" as who should say, It is a grief and a vexation to my soul, that ye would burden me, that I can not go with readiness to perform the service that God requireth at my hands. The like Christian courage was in Luther when his friends dissuaded him to go to Worms: "If all the tiles in Worms were so many devils (said he) yet would I go thither in the name of my Lord Jesus." This is the last step.

Now gather up a little what I have delivered. He that is resolved to stoop to the call of God; to prize the promises, and breathe after them; to rest upon the Lord, and to wait His time for bestowing mercy upon him; to break through all impediments and difficulties, and to count nothing too dear for God; to be content to perform ready and cheerful obedience; he that walketh thus, and treadeth in these steps, peace be upon him; Heaven is hard by; he is as sure of salvation as the angels are; it is as certain as the Lord liveth that he shall be saved with faithful Abraham, for he walketh in the steps of Abraham, and therefore he is sure to be where he is. The case, you see, is clear, and the point evident, that every faithful man may, and must, imitate faithful Abraham.

It may be here imagined, that we draw men up to too high a pitch; and, certainly, if this be the sense of the words, and the meaning of the Holy Ghost in this place, what will become of many that live in the bosom of the Church? Will you therefore see the point confirmed by reason? The ground of this doctrine stands thus: every faithful man hath the same faith, for nature and for work, that Abraham had; therefore, look what nature his faith was of, and what power it had; of the same nature and power every true believer's faith is. Briefly thus: the promises of God are the ground upon which all true faith resteth; the Spirit of God it is that worketh this faith in all believers; the power of the Spirit is that that putteth forth itself in the hearts and lives of all the faithful; gather these together: if all true believers have the same promises for the ground of their faith; have one and the same spirit to work it; have one and the same power to draw out the abilities of faith, then certainly they can not but have the very self-same actions, having the very self-same ground of their actions.

Every particular believer (as the Apostle Peter saith) "hath obtained the like precious faith." Mark, that there is a great deal of copper faith in the world—much counterfeit believing; but the saints do all partake of "the like precious faith." As when a man hath but a sixpence in silver, or a crown in gold, those small pieces, for the nature, are as good as the greatest of the same metal; so it is with the faith of God's elect. And look as it is in grafting; if there be many scions of the same kind grafted into one stock, they all partake alike of the virtue of the stock; just so it is here. The Lord Jesus Christ is the stock, as it were, into which all the faithful are grafted by the Spirit of God and faith; therefore, whatsoever fruit one beareth, another beareth also: howsoever, there may be degrees of works, yet they are of the same nature. As a little apple is the same in taste with a great one of the same tree, even so every faithful man hath the same holiness of heart and life, because he hath the same principle of holiness. The fruit indeed that one Christian bringeth may be but poor and small in comparison of others, yet it is the same in kind; the course of his life is not with so much power and fullness of grace, it may be, as another's, yet there is the same true grace, and the same practice, in the kind of it, for truth, however in degree it differ.

* * *

Let us now come to see what benefit we may make to ourselves of this point, thus proved and confirmed; and, certainly, the use of this doctrine is of great consequence. In the first place, it is a just ground of examination. For if it be true (as it can not be denied, the reasons being so strong, and arguments so plain) that every son of Abraham followeth the steps of Abraham, then here you may clearly perceive who it is that hath saving faith indeed, who they be that are true saints and the sons of Abraham. By the light of this truth, by the rule of this doctrine, if you would square your courses, and look into your conversations, you can not but discern whether you have faith or no. That man whose faith showeth itself and putteth itself forth in its several conditions, agreeably to the faith of Abraham, that man that followeth the footsteps of the faith of Abraham, let him be esteemed a faithful man, let him be reckoned for a true believer.

But if any man's faith do not this, but be contrary unto, or fall short of this, in the truth (I say not in the measure) of it, certainly it is a counterfeit, it is copper faith. O the world of counterfeit faith, then, that is in the Church at this day! It was the complaint of our Saviour Christ, that "when He should come, He should scarce find faith on the earth," as if He should say, It will be so little and scarce, that one shall hardly know where to find a faithful man. It was the complaint of the Psalmist of old, and is most true of these times, that "the faithful fail from among the children of men." Many a man "hath a name that he is alive, and yet is dead." Many have a fancy of faith, yet upon the trial we shall find that there are but few, even of those that are interested in the title of Christians, and live in the bosom of the Church, that have any right or title to the Lord Jesus, and the promises of God revealed in the Church. Let us try a few. And first, this falleth marvelous heavy upon and casteth out all ignorant persons, that were never enlightened, never quickened, never had their minds informed, touching Christ and the promises. Alas! they know not what faith meaneth, and what Christ meaneth; and how can these walk in the footsteps of the faith of Abraham, when they never saw the way of Abraham? But let them go; my heart pitieth them; I rather choose to grapple with those who think themselves in a better estate and condition.

And the first of this rank are profane persons, those that live and lie in sin, in Sabbath-breaking, swearing, drunkenness, adultery, and the like. The case of such is clear and evident: these are so far from treading in the steps of Abraham that they hate purity, and holiness, and goodness. And as for these, if any such be here, let them not be deceived, but let me tell them out of God's word, that as yet have not faith, as yet they are not the sons of Abraham. What they may be I know not; I leave them to the Lord, and wish them a sight and apprehension of their own condition, and that they may be brought out of that gall of bitterness wherein they are; but as yet, I dare say they are not the sons of Abraham. * * *

Let me go further, and you shall see more than these cut off from being the sons of Abraham; and surely, if Abraham should come down from heaven, he might complain that there were very few of his sons to be found upon the earth. In the next place, therefore, take a taste of the civilized professors, such as are not as other men; no common swearers, no profaners of the Sabbath, no drunkards, and the like. These men think that they go near indeed to the steps of Abraham, yet give me leave to scan these a little, I pray, and to try them.

Abraham (you know) did not stick with God when He called him, but was content to be under the command of God, and to yield to Him in every thing. Take now one that hath not the power of godliness in his heart; he keepeth, it may be, his fingers from filching and stealing, abstains from the gross acts of sin, and from open profaneness; but what strength of grace is there in his soul? What mortification shall you find of his secret lust? What subduing of sin within? Alas! ask him what ruleth him, at whose command he is, at whose call he cometh: I appeal to the souls and consciences of all such men; the command of God calleth, and covetousness calleth, which of these is followed? The Lord saith to the worldling, Come out of thy counting-house, and go to prayer, come and hear My word; the Lord calls to the gentlemen, Forsake thy pleasures and thy sports, and humble thyself in sackcloth and ashes; the Lord calleth for these things, the times call for them—who is obeyed? Whose commands do you stoop unto? Is there any command disobeyed but God's? If a man presume on any, it is on the Lord. Profits, pleasures, worldly business, must be attended, whether the Lord be pleased or no, or whether the duties He requireth be performed or no.

You that are gentlemen and tradesmen, I appeal to your souls whether the Lord and His cause is not the loser this way. Doth not prayer pay for it? Doth not the Word pay for it? Are not the ordinances always losers when any thing of your own cometh in competition? Is it not evident, then, that you are not under the command of the Word? How do you tremble at the wrath and threatenings of a mortal man? and yet, when you hear the Lord thunder judgments out of His Word, who is humbled? When He calls for fasting, and weeping, and mourning, who regards it? Abraham, my brethren, did not thus; these were none of his steps; no, no: he went a hundred miles off this course. The Lord no sooner said to him, "Forsake thy country and thy kindred, and thy father's house," but he forsook all, neither friend nor father prevailed to detain him from obedience, but he stooped willingly to God's command.

There are yet a third sort that come short of being the sons of Abraham, and they are the close-hearted hypocrites. These are a generation that are of a more refined kind than the last, but howsoever they carry the matter very covertly, yea, and are exceeding cunning; yet the truth will make them known. Many a hypocrite may come thus far, to be content to part with any thing, and outwardly to suffer for the cause of God, to part with divers pleasures and lusts, and to perform many holy services. But here is the difference between Abraham and these men: Abraham forsook his goods and all, but your close-hearted hypocrites have always some god or other that they do homage to, their ease, or their wealth, or some secret lust, something or other they have set up as an idol within them, and so long as they may have and enjoy that, they will part with any thing else. But thou must know, that if thou be one of Abraham's children, thou must come away from thy gods, thy god of pride, of self-love, of vain-glory, and leave worshiping of these, and be content to be alone by God and His truth. This shall suffice for the first use; I can not proceed further in the pressing thereof, because I would shut up all with the time.

The second use is a word of instruction, and it shall be but a word or two; that if all the saints of God must walk in the same way of life and salvation that Abraham did, then there is no by-way to bring a man to happiness. Look, what way Abraham went, you must go; there is no more ways: the same course that he took must be a copy for you to follow, a rule, as it were, for you to square your whole conversation by. There is no way but one to come to life and happiness. I speak it the rather to dash that idle device of many carnal men, that think the Lord hath a new invention to bring them to life, and that they need not go the ordinary way, but God hath made a shorter cut for them. Great men and gentlemen think God will spare them. What, must they be humbled, and fast, and pray? That is for poor men, and mean men. Their places and estates will not suffer it; therefore surely God hath given a dispensation to them. And the poor men, they think it is for gentlemen that have more leisure and time: alas, they live by their labor, and they must take pains for what they have, and therefore they can not do what is required. But be not deceived; if there be any way beside that which Abraham went, then will I deny myself. But the case is clear, the Lord saith it, the Word saith it; the same way, the same footsteps that Abraham took, we must take, if ever we will come where Abraham is.

You must not balk in this kind, whoever you are; God respecteth no man's person. If you would arrive at the same haven, you must sail through the same sea. You must walk the same way of grace, if you would come to the same kingdom of glory. It is a conceit that harboreth in the hearts of many men, nay, of most men in general, especially your great wise men and your great rich men, that have better places and estates in the world than ordinary. What, think they, may not a man be saved without all this ado? What needs all this? Is there not another way besides this? Surely, my brethren, you must teach our Saviour Christ and the Apostle Paul another way. I am sure they never knew another; and he that dreameth of another way must be content to go beside. There is no such matter as the devil would persuade you; it is but his delusion to keep you under infidelity, and so shut you up to destruction under false and vain conceits. The truth is, here is the way, and the only way, and you must walk here if ever you come to life and happiness. Therefore, be not deceived, suffer not your eyes to be blinded; but know, what Abraham did, you must do the same, if not in action, yet in affection. If God say, Forsake all, thou must do it, at least in affection. Thou must still wait upon His power and providence; yield obedience to Him in all things; be content to submit thyself to His will. *This* is the way you must walk in, if you ever come to heaven.

The last use shall be a use of comfort to all the saints and people of God, whose consciences can witness that they have labored to walk in the uprightness of their heart as Abraham did. I have two or three words to speak to these.

Be persuaded out of the word of God, that your course is good, and go on with comfort, and the God of heaven be with you; and be sure of it, that you that walk with Abraham shall be at rest with Abraham; and it shall never repent you of all the pains that you have taken. Haply it may seem painful and tedious to you; yet, what Abigail said to David, let me say to you: "Oh," saith she, "let not my lord do this: when the Lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good that He hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel, this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offense of heart, that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself." My brethren, let me say to you, You will find trouble and inconveniences, and hard measure at the hands of the wicked in this world. Many Nabals and Cains will set themselves against you; but go on, and bear it patiently. Know it is a troublesome way, but a true way; it is grievous but yet good; and the end will be happy. It will never repent you, when the Lord hath performed all the good that He hath spoken concerning you.

Oh! to see a man drawing his breath low and short, after he hath spent many hours and days in prayer to the Lord, grappling with his corruptions, and striving to pull down his base lusts; after he hath waited upon the Lord in a constant course of obedience Take but such a man, and ask him, now his conscience is opened, whether the ways of holiness and sincerity be not irksome to him, whether he be not grieved with himself for undergoing so much needless trouble (as the world thinks it); and his soul will then clear this matter. It is true he hath had a tedious course of it, but now his death will be blessed. He hath striven for a crown, and now beholds a crown. Now he is beyond the waves. All the contempts, and imprisonments, and outrages of wicked men, are now too short to reach him. He is so far from repenting, that he rejoiceth and triumpheth in reflecting back upon all the pains, and care, and labor of love, whereby he hath loved the Lord Jesus, in submitting his heart unto Him.

Take me another man, that hath lived here in pomp and jollity, hath had many livings, great preferments, much honor, abundance of pleasure, yet hath been ever careless of God and of His word, profane in his course, loose in his conversation, and ask him upon his death-bed, how it standeth with him. Oh! woe the time that ever he spent it as he hath done. Now the soul begins to hate the man, and the very sight of him, that hath been the instrument with it in the committing of sin. Now nothing but gall and wormwood remaineth. Now the sweetness of the adulterer's lust is gone, and nothing but the sting of conscience remaineth. Now the covetous man must part with his goods, and the gall of asps must stick behind. Now the soul sinks within, and the heart is overwhelmed with sorrow. Take but these two men, I say, and judge by their ends, whether it will ever repent you that you have done well, that you have walked in the steps of the faith of Abraham.

My brethren, howsoever, you have had many miseries, yet the Lord hath many mercies for you. God dealeth with His servants, as a father doth with his son, after he hath sent him on a great journey to do some business; and the weather falleth foul, and the way proveth dangerous, and many a storm, and great difficulties are to be gone through. Oh, how the heart of that father pitieth his son! How doth he resolve to requite him, if he ever live to come home again. What preparation doth he make to entertain, and welcome him; and how doth he study to do good unto him! My brethren, so it is here; I beseech you, think of it, you that are the saints and people of God. You must find in your way many troubles and griefs (and we ought to find them), but be not discouraged. The more misery, the greater mercy. God the Father seeth His servants: and if they suffer and endure for a good conscience, as His eye seeth them, so His soul pitieth them. His heart bleeds within Him for them; that is, He hath a tender compassion of them, and He saith within Himself, Well, I will requite them if ever they come into My kingdom; all their patience, and care, and conscience in walking in My ways, I will requite; and they shall receive a double reward from Me, even a crown of eternal glory. Think of these things that are not seen; they are eternal. The things that are seen are temporal, and they will deceive us. Let our hearts be carried after the other, and rest in them forever!

DISCOURSE SIXTY-SIXTH.

COTTON MATHER, D.D., F.R.S.

Mather was born in Boston in 1663. He was a grandson of John Cotton. In 1678 he graduated at Harvard College, and was ordained collegiate minister of the North Church, in Boston, in 1684. He died in February, 1738. Mather was a man of great learning; and so valuable did he consider his time for reading, that he wrote over his study-door "BE SHORT." His publications amounted to three hundred and eighty-two, many of which were small, but some voluminous. His "Ecclesiastical History of New England," is the largest of those published, in seven volumes, folio.

The style of Mather is sprightly and poetic, but his writings are marred by puerilities and strange conceits. The sermon here given is copied from a small volume, bearing the imprint of "Boston, in New England, 1721." It was preached before the Commissioners for the Propagation of the Gospel among the American Indians. It is of special interest as furnishing a specimen of preaching in the age succeeding the time of the giant-minded planters of New England, and before the era of the great revivals.

THE JOYFUL SOUND OF SALVATION.

"Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound."—PSALM lxxxix. 15.

There was a direction given and taken in the old Church of Israel, "Make thee two trumpets of silver, that thou mayst use them for the calling of the assembly." By the sound of such silver trumpets, the people of God were called unto the employments and enjoyments of their sacred solemnities. And was this the joyful sound, for which the people that heard it, are now pronounced a *blessed people?* I deny not the reference hereunto, which may be here supposed.

But then, we will suppose a further intent of the Holy Spirit, by whom the Psalm was dictated. He may intend the joyful sound, which in the Gospel and the institutions thereof, His people are blessed withal. And accordingly, it will be no wrong unto the text, if we put it unto the use of supporting this doctrine.

I. Glorious is the blessedness of the people, who truly know the joyful sound, which in and with the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, and the institutions thereof, arrives unto us.

In the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, there is a joyful sound, which we are made partakers of. A true knowledge of this joyful sound, will render the people that have it, a *blessed people.*

Let us proceed more distinctly, in three propositions, to consider what we have before us.

First. There is a *joyful sound*, which is to be heard among the children of men, where the Gospel is published, and where the ordinances of it are established. The sound of the silver trumpets which entertained the ancient Israelites, in and for their solemn assemblies, was no less typical than musical. In these days of the New Testament, we have the substance of the instrumental music, which was of old used in the worship of God; the shadow is vanished away. The shadow was of old confined unto the temple; but the substance we have now in every synagogue. The usage of instrumental music in our public worship of God, has been long since disrelished among His faithful people. Justin Martyr long ago exploded it. Yea, Aquineas, himself, as late or less than five hundred years ago, decried it. Indeed it was one of the last things which the *man of sin* introduced into the worship of the Saviour, which he had already filled with a multitude of superstitions. We will then, for the present, look on the Jewish trumpets, and organs too. as a part of the abrogated pedagogy. Yea, but the trumpets of the Gospel, these we have still sounding in our ears, but the sound has diverse properties assigned unto it, which it will be proper for us now to take notice of.

There is a *sound* in the Gospel, and the ordinances thereof; and it is, first, a *great sound.* Oh! were we so much "in the spirit on the Lord's Day," as to hear, what is to be heard in the Gospel then brought unto us, we should be able to say, I heard a great voice as of a trumpet. There is a famous prophecy: "The great trumpet shall be blown, and they that were ready to perish, shall come and worship the Lord." Whatever other accomplishments this prophecy may have, it is very gloriously accomplished in the proclamation which our Saviour in His Gospel makes unto us. The Gospel, as with the sound of a trumpet, invites the sinners ready to perish, O come, and worship, and obey, and enjoy the Lord. And when this great trumpet is blown, *great*, *great* is the sound thereof. The sound of the trumpet is great in the *extent* of it. We read, "The sound goes into all the earth." In less than forty years, it reached unto the utmost bounds of the vast Roman Empire; and though Satan seduced numbers of miserables into America, that they might be out of its hearing, it has now reached hither also. The silver trumpets were at first but a couple, for the two sons of Aaron; but afterward, in Solomon's time, we find an hundred and twenty silver trumpets all sounding together. Before the incarnation of our Saviour, His Gospel was heard but a little way. Afterward, it sounded far and near, and the Gospel was *preached unto every creature:* it might be said, *it sounds in every place.* The sound of the trumpet is also *great* in the *effect* of it. A loud sound, indeed; so loud, as to awaken them that have a dead sleep upon them! So loud, as to convey life unto them that lie dead in trespasses and sins: "The hour now is, when the dead hear the voice of the Son of God and live." The sound of this trumpet fetches back the lost souls of all the elect from the power of Satan unto God. They are not silver trumpets that are now sounding unto us; but they are *saving* trumpets! Faith comes, the love of God comes, the love of our neighbor comes, and the foretaste of heaven comes, by the hearing of them. What are they, but the power of God unto salvation.

Secondly. 'Tis a good sound as well as a great one. No trumpets can give so good, so grateful, so lovely a sound as the trumpets of the Gospel do. Fame often in her trumpet, has a sound, which may not be relied upon; but every trumpet of the Gospel gives a sound, of none but faithful sayings, and worthy of all acceptation. We are told: "As cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country." In the trumpets of the Gospel, we have the sound of nothing but good news "from a far country:" The sound which we hear in the trumpets of the Gospel, is what was once heard from the mouth of an angel: "Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, that unto you there is born a Saviour." Wherever the Gospel comes, there is a sound of this tenor; good news for you who by your sins have the face of God hidden from you; there is a Jesus, who saves His people from their sins. Good news for you who have the wrath of God abiding on you. There is a Jesus, who delivers from the wrath to come. The joyful sound, which here distinguishes a blessed people, may carry some allusion to the trumpets of jubilee, heard once in fifty years among the Israelites. Once in fifty years, there was that custom observed; "Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound, and ye shall proclaim liberty throughout the land." Certainly, the trumpets of September, proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord, made a very good sound unto the poor people that were now to see a release from various miseries: a good sound unto the servants, who were now to call for and to take up their indentures: a good sound unto the debtors, whose mortgages were now expired, and whose tenements returned unto them. Thus where the Gospel arrives, it brings a jubilee with it. It proclaims a liberty for the captives; a redemption for the miserable; a recovery of what we sinned away. 'Tis the Gospel of peace; the trumpets of the Gospel, are trumpets of peace. The sound of these trumpets is, a reconciliation with God obtained for sinners; the anger of God now turned away from those, whom He was once angry withal! The trumpets which gave the law, had a sound that was trembled at. The guilty sinner hearing those trumpets, may have it said of him, a dreadful sound is in his ears. The sound of those trumpets is, Cursed is he that continued not in all things to do them. The Gospel of our salvation, this is a much more pleasant sound than so. The sound of it is Grace! Grace! The grace that will pardon the penitent! The grace that will quicken the impotent! The grace that will heal them that languish under all sorts of maladies!

No wonder then if, *thirdly*, it be a glad sound, when we find it such a good one. A joyful sound! The souls that are effectually called by the sound of the Gospel, how joyful does it render them! The trumpets of the Gospel do to the soul, as the harps of David did unto Saul: they drive away the evil spirit of sorrow, of sadness of despair. The Psalmist could say, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." The trumpets which gave a joyful sound unto the blessed people, had this among other intentions of them, they were for the calling of the assembly. Glad, glad at heart, was that Israelite indeed, when he heard the trumpets give that call: "Come away to the sacrifices!" The trumpets of the Gospel call us to those appointments of God, wherein we are to glorify Him with the sacrifices of righteousness; and how glad will a sincere Christian be of such invitations! But then, in these appointments of God, what is it we meet withal? Enough to make us "rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory!" The tenders of a Saviour, a powerful, a merciful, and only SAVIOUR, are here made unto us. Oh, the joyful sound of such tenders! The promises of a most gracious Covenant are here brought unto us. These very great and precious promises; oh, the joyful sound of them! The sound of these promises is, Rejoice, O thou saved soul; God the Father is thy Friend; God the Son is thy Surety for good; God the Spirit is thy Conductor and Comforter; be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee. The angels are thy guardians, thou art a temple of God. God will make all things work together for thy good. And there are the spiritual blessings of the heavenly places reserved for thee! Oh! joyful sound! How reviving! how ravishing! When the Gospel was preached with success: "There was great joy in the city." Well might there be so, on such a joyful sound! How joyful is the soldier when the trumpet invites him "to the spoil! to the spoil!" The joyful sound of the Gospel carries this in it: else it had not been said, "I rejoice at Thy word, as one that findeth great spoil." The blessings which the word of God lead us to, are matchless treasures. What a joyful sound must it be that leads us to them!

II. In order to blessedness, it is requisite, not only that we have, but also that we know the joyful sound, which is brought unto us in the Gospel, and in the ordinances of it. Indeed, in a larger sense, to have the joyful sound, is to know it. A people that have the Gospel, and know the joyful sound, in the external enjoyment of it, these do enjoy a rich favor of God. The places which enjoy the Scriptures and have the Church state, with the faith and order of the Gospel, are therein highly favored of the Lord.

Gideon's fleece, wet with the dews of heaven, when the ground all about is dry, has a singular token for good upon it. The sound of the trumpets which proclaim the kingdom of God, is heard in some happy lands, while others are left unacquained with it: even so, righteous Father, because it pleases Thee! And so far they have a singular happiness. It may be said unto them, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear." Such a people are in some degree the favorites of heaven. They have the kingdom in some essay of it among them. Where the trumpets of the Gospel are sounding, we may say, "The Lord is near." Yea, the name of that City, that Country, is JEHOVAH SHAMMAH, the Lord is there. A people who so far know the joyful sound, are after a peculiar manner known by the King of heaven: He may say to such: "You only have I known." But alas, many who so far know the joyful sound, may after all come to "lie down in sorrow." They that are so far lifted up to heaven, may be thrown down to hell after all. In such a knowledge of the joyful sound, as will render a people a blessed people, there is more implied than a mere hearing of it. To know the joyful sound, as it should be known, is to know the meaning of it, the value of it, the credit of it, and the power of it.

First. There are people who discern the joyful sound. The silver trumpets of old, were distinct and signal in the sound thereof. The marches, the motions, the stands, of the armies passing through the wilderness, were directed by the sound. The trumpets of the Gospel give orders unto us; we are to take our measures from their joyful sound. People know the joyful sound when they understand the Gospel, and perceive the mind of the Lord. There are those under the Gospel, to whom our Lord says, as He once did unto His diciples after the sermon in Matt. xiii. 51, "Have ye understood all these things?" And they can reply, "Yea, Lord!" We may say concerning the trumpets of the Gospel, as was of old said concerning the Pauline epistles, "There are in them some things hard to be understood." But there are people who do competently understand them. They readily perceive the language of the trumpets about the whole mystery of Christ, and the homage that we owe unto Him; 'tis not a strange language unto them.

O blessed people, who so know the joyful sound! We remember the speech of the Pharisees, about the people which know not the law—how justly to be spoken about the people who know not the Gospel! But then, blessed the people who do know it! How it thunders, in Isaiah, xxvii. 11! It is a people of no understanding, therefore He that made them will not have mercy on them; He that formed them will show them no favor. But then, on the other side, a joyful people that understand well the joyful sound, are a people that God has much mercy for, much favor for; a people greatly blessed of the Lord.

Secondly. There are people who esteem the joyful sound. They so know it as to prize it, set a vast price upon it. In the Bible words of knowledge do sometimes signify affection too. Some so know the joyful sound as to be well affected unto it; yea, to prefer it unto their chiefest joy. There are people who had rather be with David, where they may hear what God the Lord shall say unto them in the silver trumpets of the Gospel, than be with Belshazzar, at a bout where golden vessels are caroused in. They count no melody like that which is to be heard in the courts of the Lord, and looking on the silver trumpets, they say as he, "More to be desired are they than much fine gold." They will strive to have their silver trumpets with them, whatever expense of silver or any thing else it puts them to. They begrudge no cost for it; are patient, though it cost them the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction.

O blessed people who so know the joyful sound! We are told, "Great peace have they that love Thy law." If the trumpets of the Gospel have our love, they will then speak our peace, cause our peace. The fruits of the lips that blow in those trumpets are peace, peace, and all the blessings of goodness!

Thirdly. There are people who believe the joyful sound. We read of the good seed falling into good and honest hearts; thus there is the good sound coming into good and honest ears. There are some that find no jars in the sound of the silver trumpets; they raise no disputes about it; they start no cavils upon it. It was a noble confession of faith, "I worship God, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets." Thus there are people who live unto God, and live by the faith of the Son of God; and it is because they believe all things that are sounded in the trumpets of the Gospel. About the trumpets that sounded on Sinai, it was the persuasion of the people in all after ages; Lord, thou spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments. Truly in the trumpets that we have sounding from Zion, we have the Lord speaking from heaven unto us, and we have right judgments in them. This is the persuasion of the people that know right judgments. They embrace the Gospel with reason satisfied, and faith established.

O blessed people who so know the joyful sound! The unbeliever is always under the wrath of God. The portion of the unbeliever is forever to be deprecated. But our Lord hath assured us, "Blessed are they that have believed."

Fourthly. There are people who obey the joyful sound. We are informed, "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar." There are some who so know as to do: they know practically. Their knowledge has their practice conformed unto it. They hear the trumpets of the Gospel, and they are not the self-deceivers who are no doers, but hearers only. When the sound of the silver trumpets is, Repair among them who have listed themselves under the banner of their Saviour: then these people come and put themselves under the conduct of the Lord, who is an ensign for the people. If the sound of the silver trumpet be, Arm, arm yourselves against the adversaries that seek to devour you: then these people put on the whole armor of God. If the sound of the silver trumpet be fall on, Fall on, give no quarter to the lusts from which you have your wounds: then these people mortify their members which are upon the earth. If the sound of the silver trumpets be, Retreat, retreat out of the reach of the destroyer: then these people abstain frm the fleshy lusts which war against their souls.

O blessed people, who so know the joyful sound! It is one of the notes in the silver trumpets, If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. And one of the Divine heralds that carried the silver trumpets through the world has assured us, "the doer of the Word, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

III. The blessedness of the people who thus know this joyful sound, is a very glorious blessedness.

A most considerable article of the blessedness attending a people who hear the silver trumpets of the Gospel, and pay due regards unto them, is this: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance. A gracious preference of the blessed God among a people accompanies the joyful sound. The silver trumpets are heard nowhere but where the King of heaven keeps His court. There are those whose office it is to blow in the silver trumpets. Unto those our Saviour has engaged himself, "Lo, I am with you always." Will health, and wealth, and rest among a people make a blessed people? 'Tis commonly thought so. But what will God have among a people? Oh, blessed that people whose God is the Lord, and who have a gracious preference of God among them. Even such are the people who know the joyful sound! Where the Gospel, with the ordinances of it are well settled, maintained, respected, and the silver trumpets well sounded among a people, it may be said, as in Numbers xxiii. 21, "The Lord their God is with them, and the shout of a king is among them." In one word the ordinances of the Gospel furnish us with opportunities for communion with God. "In them I will commune with you," saith the Lord. We may herein draw near to God, God will herein draw near to us. The voice of the silver trumpets is, Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you! Can any blessedness be more glorious?

But more particularly, *First*, In the joyful sound, we have the guide to blessedness. The silver trumpets put us into the way, unto the "rest that remaineth for the people of God." We are ignorant of the way to blessedness; and the way of peace we have not known. But where the trumpets of the Gospel sound, there is a fulfillment of that word: "Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, this is the way, walk in it." They reveal to us what we are to think, what we are to do, what we are to wish for; they lead us in the way wherein we should go.

Secondly. In the joyful sound we have the cause of blessedness. The silver trumpets are like the golden pipes in Zechariah, which convey the golden oil of grace into the souls of men. 'Tis by them that God fetches men out of the graves, in which they lie sinfully and woefully putrifying; and infuses a principle of piety into them; and inclines them to the things that are holy, and just, and good. That effectual calling which brings men into blessedness, 'tis in the trumpets of the Gospel that the spirit of God gives it unto His chosen ones; men hear the word of the Gospel and believe.

APPLICATION.

But let us now make some improvements of these instructions.

I. Blessed the people who know the joyful sound; then wretched the people, forlorn the people, undone the people, who are strangers to the joyful sound. Oh! the pity that is due unto them!

The Jewish nation have now lost their silver trumpets for these many ages. And in their long dispersion how pathetical is their cry unto us. Have pity on me, O ye, my friends, have pity on me, for the hand of the Lord hath touched me. Yea, and how many Protestant Churches have, in our days, had their silver trumpets forced from them; and instead thereof heard the "enemies roaring in the midst of the congregations!" Yea, how many nations are there that never heard the joyful sound! That lie buried in Paganizing or in Mohammedan infidelity. And is it not a lamentable thing that so near unto ourselves there should be so many ungospelized plantations! Our pity for those ought certainly to put us upon prayer for them; upon study for them. Oh! what shall be done for them who lie in wickedness, and have this epitaph upon them: *If our Gospel be hid, it is hid unto them that be lost.*

II. Blessed the people, who know the joyful sound; then we are a blessed people; and at the same time we are to be taught how to continue so. My brethren, we have the joyful sound at such a rate, that it may almost be said of us as in Deuteronomy: "What nation is there who hath God so nigh unto them?" For the silver trumpets to be heard sounding as they are in the American regions; verily 'tis the Lord's doings, and marvelous in our eyes. May we ever account these our precious and our pleasant things.

Oh! how thankful ought we to be unto our God for His Gospel, and the ordinances of it! When the silver trumpets were of old going to sound, the angels of God were heard making those acclamations thereupon, "Glory to God in the highest." And shall not we give glory to the most High God on the occasion! O Gospelized people, God hath showed His statutes and His judgments unto us, praise ye the Lord. When the trumpets of God are sounding shall not our trumpets be sounding too? His trumpets are in His ordinances; our trumpets are in our thanksgivings, we are so called upon: "With trumpets make a joyful noise before the Lord."

Such a blessed people should be a thankful people. But verily, our God will not look on us as a thankful people, if we are not also a fruitful people. A barren people; oh! what a fearful doom are they threatened with! what a fearful fate are they warned of! "It is nigh unto cursing." Sirs, be fruitful in every good work; fruitful and always abounding in the work of the Lord.

In the midst of these cares you will use all due means, that you may see no intermission of the joyful sound. You will provide seasonably for the succession that shall be needful, by all due cares about the means of education in our land, without which the land becomes a Scythian desert. But when you make this provision, oh! look up to the glorious Lord, that you may be blessed with truly silver trumpets; never have any but a man of worth; such as will be of good metal; and such as in the cause of God will always "lift up their voice like a trumpet."

But this is that which is most of all to be urged upon you. Hearken, hearken to the joyful sound. Hearken to it, and comply with it. The joyful sound is that "Let the wicked forsake his way, and return to the Lord, who will have mercy on him." Hearken to it, and with echoes of devotion reply, "My God, I return unto Thee!" The joyful sound is that: "Come to me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Hearken to it, and with echoes of devotion reply, "My Saviour, I come unto Thee!" That grace of God which bringeth salvation, has the joyful sound of the silver trumpets in it. Now, your echoes to the trumpet must be these: Lord, I desire, I resolve to lead a godly, a sober, a righteous life before Thee!

My friends, the last trumpet that is to sound at the appearance of the glorious Lord, who is to judge the world, will ere long summon you to give an account of your compliance with the silver trumpets of God. You that now hear the joyful sound of these trumpets, must ere long hear the awful sound of that amazing trumpet. A loud and a shrill trumpet will sound, "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment." Oh! may our compliance with the joyful sound of the silver trumpets now be such that we may find mercy in that day. So comply with it now that the joyful sound of a, "Come ye blessed," may be heard by you in the day when "the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."

DISCOURSE SIXTY-SEVENTH.

JONATHAN EDWARDS.

This distinguished metaphysician and divine was born at Windsor, Connecticut, October 5, 1703. His father was a useful minister of the Gospel. His mother, to whom he owed so much for his early religious training, was a woman of great piety and remarkable intelligence. Her character has been thus sketched:—"Devotedly pious, consecrated to her work, and entering into all her husband's plans of usefulness, she was, at the same time, remarkably intellectual. Her concealed metaphysics broke out amid kitchen and parish duties; and even in her devotions she was a philosopher without knowing it. Inferior to her husband in taste and years of life, she possessed a more stern and powerful intellect, fond of reasoning, of studying philosophy, and pondering the deepest problems of theology. Had Paul's prohibition been out of the way, she might have eclipsed her companion in the pulpit, and anticipated the fame of her immortal son."

While a boy, Edwards read Locke on the Understanding, and similar works, with a keen relish. He was graduated at Yale College before he was seventeen years of age. After preaching a few months in New York, he was appointed tutor at Yale College in 1724. Here he continued till 1726, when he was invited to preach in Northampton, Mass., where he was ordained, as colleague of his grandfather, Mr. Stoddard, in Feb. 1727. He continued in this place more than twenty-three years, and the Lord crowned his labors with abundant success. The "Great Awakening" commenced under his preaching.* From August, 1751, he was six years missionary to the Housatonic Indians, Stockbridge, Mass. During this time he produced some of his great works, which gave him a world-wide reputation. In 1758 he accepted the office of President of Princeton College, New Jersey; but he died from small-pox, by inoculation, March 22, 1758, only a few months after his appointment, aged fifty-four years. His last words were, "Trust in God, and ye need not fear."

It has been said of Edwards, that he would have been the greatest of philosophers, if he had not been the greatest of divines. The secret of his intellectual strength lay in the faculty of *abstraction;* bestowed upon him, perhaps, in as great plenitude as upon any other man. It is not needful to speak of his many profound writings, which take rank among the very highest of uninspired productions.

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* See Sketch of American Pulpit.

As a preacher Edwards has been rarely if ever excelled since the days of the apostles. His manner was not oratorical, and his voice was feeble; but this was of little account, with so much directness and richness of thought, and such overwhelming power of argument, pressed home upon the conscience and the heart. In vain did any one attempt to escape from falling a prey under his mighty appeal. It was in the *application* of his subject that he specially excelled. The part of the sermon before this was only preparatory. Here was the stretching out of the arms of the discourse, to borrow a figure, upon the hearts and lives of his audience. "It was a kind of moral inquisition; and sinners were put upon argumentative racks, and beneath screws, and with an awful revolution of the great truth in hand, evenly and steadily screwed down and crushed."

The most celebrated sermon of Edwards is that which is here given; preached at Enfield, Connecticut, July 8, 1741. One said of it:—"I think a person of moral sensibility, alone at midnight, reading that awful discourse, would well-nigh go crazy. He would hear the judgment trump, and see the advancing heaven, and the day of doom would begin to mantle him with its shroud." This sermon gave a powerful impulse to the great revival then progressing. The most wonderful effect was produced upon the audience during its delivery. It is stated that the hearers groaned and shrieked convulsively; and their outcries of distress once drowned the preacher's voice, and compelled him to make a long pause. Some of the audience actually seized fast hold upon the pillars and braces of the meeting-house, as if that very moment their sliding feet were precipitating them into the gulf of ruin; and a fellow-clergyman, sitting at the time in the pulpit, cried out, "Mr. Edwards, Mr. Edwards! Is not God *merciful* too?"

SINNERS IN THE HANDS OF AN ANGRY GOD.

"Their foot shall slide in due time."—DEUT. xxxii. 35.

In this verse is threatened the vengeance of God on the wicked, unbelieving Israelites, who were God's visible people, and lived under means of grace; and who, notwithstanding all God's wonderful works that He had wrought toward that people, yet remained, as is expressed in the twenty-eighth verse, void of counsel, having no understanding in them; and that, under all the cultivations of heaven, brought forth bitter and poisonous fruit; as in the two verses next preceding the text.

The expression that I have chosen for my text, "Their foot shall slide in due time," seems to imply the following things, relating to the punishment and destruction that these wicked Israelites were exposed to:

1. That they were always exposed to destruction; as one that stands or walks in slippery places is always exposed to fall. This is implied in the manner of their destruction's coming upon them, being represented by their foot's sliding. The same is expressed in the seventy-third Psalm: "Surely Thou didst set them in slippery places; Thou castedst them down into destruction."

2. It implies that they were always exposed to sudden, unexpected destruction. As he that walks in slippery places is every moment liable to fall, he can not foresee one moment whether he shall stand or fall the next; and when he does fall, he falls at once, without wavering, which is also expressed in the seventy-third Psalm: "Surely Thou didst set them in slippery places: Thou castedst them down into destruction: how are they brought into desolation as in a moment!"

3. Another thing implied is, that they are liable to fall of themselves, without being thrown down by the hand of another; as he that stands or walks on slippery ground needs nothing but his own weight to throw him down.

4. That the reason why they are not fallen already, and do not fall now, is only that God's appointed time is not come. For it is said that when that due time or appointed time comes, "their feet shall slide." Then they shall be left to fall, as they are inclined by their own weight. God will not hold them up in these slippery places any longer, but will let them go; and then, at that very instant, they shall fall into destruction; as he that stands on such slippery, declining ground, on the edge of a pit, that he can not stand alone, when he is let go he immediately falls and is lost.

The observation from the words that I would now insist upon is this:

There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell but the mere pleasure of God.

By the mere pleasure of God I mean His sovereign pleasure, His arbitrary will, restrained by no obligation, hindered by no manner of difficulty, any more than if nothing else but God's mere will had in the least degree or in any respect whatever any hand in the preservation of wicked men one moment.

The truth of this observation may appear by the following considerations:

1. There is no want of power in God to cast wicked men into hell at any moment. Men's hands can not be strong when God rises up: the strongest have no power to resist Him, nor can any deliver out of His hands.

He is not only able to cast wicked men into hell, but He can most easily do it. Sometimes an earthly prince meets with a great deal of difficulty to subdue a rebel, that has found means to fortify himself, and has made himself strong by the number of his followers. But it is not so with God. There is no fortress that is any defense against the power of God. Though hand join in hand, and vast multitudes of God's enemies combine and associate themselves, they are easily broken in pieces: they are as great heaps of light chaff before the whirlwind; or large quantities of dry stubble before devouring flames. We find it easy to tread on and crush a worm that we see crawling on the earth; so it is easy for us to cut or sunder a slender thread that any thing hangs by; thus easy it is for God, when He pleases, to cast His enemies down to hell. What are we, that we should think to stand before Him, at whose rebuke the earth trembles, and before whom the rocks are thrown down!

2. They deserve to be cast into hell; so that Divine justice never stands in the way, it makes no objection against God's using His power at any moment to destroy them. Yea, on the contrary, justice calls aloud for an infinite punishment of their sins. Divine justice says of the tree that brings forth such grapes of Sodom, "cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" The sword of Divine justice is every moment brandished over their hands, and it is nothing but the hand of arbitrary mercy, and God's mere will that holds it back.

3. They are already under a sentence of condemnation to hell. They do not only justly deserve to be cast down thither, but the sentence of the law of God—that eternal and immutable rule of righteousness that God has fixed between Him and mankind—is gone out against them; and stands against them; so that they are bound over already to hell: "he that believeth not is condemned already;" so that every unconverted man properly belongs to hell; that is his place; from thence he is: "ye are from beneath;" and thither he is found; it is the place that justice, and God's word, and the sentence of His unchangeable law, assign to him.

4. They are now the objects of that very same anger and wrath of God, that is expressed in the torments of hell; and the reason why they do not go down to hell at each moment, is not because God, in whose power they are, is not then very angry with them; as angry as He is with many of those miserable creatures that He is now tormenting in hell, and do there feel and bear the fierceness of His wrath. Yea, God is a great deal more angry with great numbers that are now on earth; yea, doubtless, with many that are now in this congregation, that, it may be, are at ease and quiet, than He is with many of those that are now in the flames of hell.

So that it is not because God is unmindful of their wickedness, and does not resent it, that He does not let loose His hand and cut them off. God is not altogether such a one as themselves, though they imagine Him to be so. The wrath of God burns against them; their damnation does not slumber; the pit is prepared; the fire is made ready; the furnace is now hot, ready to receive them; the flames do now rage and glow. The glittering sword is whet, and held over them, and the pit hath opened her mouth under them.

5. The devil stands ready to fall upon them, and seize them as his own, at what moment God shall permit him. They belong to him; he has their souls in his possession, and under his dominion. The Scripture represents them as his goods. The devils watch them; they are ever by them, at their right hand; they stand waiting for them, like greedy, hungry lions that see their prey, and expect to have it, but are for the present kept back; if God should withdraw His hand by which they are restrained, they would in one moment fly upon their poor souls. The old Serpent is gaping for them; hell opens its mouth wide to receive them; and if God should permit, they would be hastily swallowed up and lost.

6. There are in the souls of wicked men those hellish principles reigning, that would presently kindle and flame out in hell-fire, if it were not for God's restraints. There is laid in the very nature of carnal men, a foundation for the torments of hell: there are those corrupt principles, in reigning power in them, and in full possession of them, that are the beginnings of hell-fire. These principles are active and powerful, exceeding violent in their nature, and if it were not for the restraining hand of God upon them, they would soon break out, they would flame out after the same manner as the same corruptions, the same enmity does in the hearts of damned souls, and would beget the same torments in them as they do in them. The souls of the wicked are in Scripture compared to the troubled sea, For the present God restrains their wickedness by His mighty

power, as He does the raging waves of the troubled sea, saying, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further;" but if God should withdraw that restraining power, it would soon carry all before it. Sin is the ruin and misery of the soul; it is destructive in its nature; and if God should leave it without restraint, there would need nothing else to make the soul perfectly miserable. The corruption of the heart of man is a thing that is immoderate and boundless in its fury; and while wicked men live here, it is like fire pent up by God's restraints, whereas if it were let loose, it would set on fire the course of nature; and as the heart is now a sink of sin, so, if sin was not restrained, it would immediately turn the soul into a fiery oven, or a furnace of fire and brimstone.

7. It is no security to wicked men for one moment, that there are no visible means of death at hand. It is no security to a natural man, that he is now in health, and that he does not see which way he should now immediately go out of the world by any accident, and that there is no visible danger in any respect in his circumstances. The manifold and continual experience of the world in all ages, shows that this is no evidence that a man is not on the very brink of eternity, and that the next step will not be into another world. The unseen, unthought-of ways and means of persons going suddenly out of the world are innumerable and inconceivable. Unconverted men walk over the pit of hell on a rotten covering, and there are innumerable places in this covering, so weak that they will not bear their weight, and these places are not seen. The arrows of death fly unseen at noon-day; the sharpest sight can not discern them. God has so many different, unsearchable ways of taking wicked men out of the world and sending them to hell, that there is nothing to make it appear, that God had need to be at the expense of a miracle, or go out of the ordinary course of his Providence, to destroy any wicked man, at any moment. All the means that there are of sinners going out of the world, are so in God's hand, and so absolutely subject to His power and determination, that it does not depend at all less on the mere will of God, whether sinners shall at any moment go to hell, than if means were never made use of, or at all concerned in the case.

8. Natural men's prudence and care to preserve their own lives, or the care of others to preserve them, do not secure them a moment. This, Divine providence and universal experience do also bear testimony to. There is this clear evidence that men's own wisdom is no security to them from death: that if it were otherwise we should see some difference between the wise and politic men

of the world, and others, with regard to their liableness to early and unexpected death; but how is it in fact? "How dieth the wise man? As the fool."

9. All wicked men's pains and contrivance they use to escape hell, while they continue to reject Christ, and so remain wicked men, do not secure them from hell one moment. Almost every natural man that hears of hell, flatters himself that he shall escape it; he depends upon himself for his own security; he flatters himself in what he has done, in what he is now doing, or what he intends to do; every one lays out matters in his own mind how he shall avoid damnation, and flatters himself that he contrives well for himself, and that his schemes will not fail. They hear, indeed, that there are but few sacred, and that the bigger part of men that have died heretofore are gone to hell; but each one imagines that he lays out matters better for his own escape than others have done: he does not intend to come to that place of torment; he says within himself, that he intends to take care that shall be effectual, and to order matter so for himself as not to fail.

But the foolish children of men do miserably delude themselves in their own schemes, and in their confidence in their own strength and wisdom, they trust to nothing but a shadow. The bigger part of those that heretofore have lived under the same means of grace, and are now dead, are undoubtedly gone to hell; and it was not because they were not as wise as those that are now alive; it was not because they did not lay out matters as well for themselves to secure their own escape. If it were so that we could come to speak with them, and could inquire of them, one by one, whether they expected, when alive, and when they used to hear about hell, ever to be subjects of that misery, we, doubtless, should hear one and another reply, "No, I never intended to come here: I had laid out matters otherwise in my mind; I thought I should contrive well for myself; I thought my scheme good: I intended to take effectual care; but it came upon me unexpectedly; I did not look for it at that time, and in that manner; it came as a thief; death outwitted me. God's wrath was too quick for me: O, my cursed foolishness! I was flattering myself, and pleasing myself with vain dreams of what I would do hereafter; and when I was saying peace and safety, then sudden destruction came upon me."

10. God has laid Himself under no obligations, by any promise, to keep any natural man out of hell one moment: God certainly has made no promises either of eternal life, or of any deliverance or preservation from eternal death, but what are contained in the cove-

nant of grace, the promises that are given in Christ, in whom all the promises are yea and amen. But surely they have no interest in the promises of the covenant of grace that are not the children of the covenant, and that do not believe in any of the promises of the covenant, and have no interest in the Mediator of the covenant.

So that, whatever some have imagined and pretended about promises made to natural men's earnest seeking and knocking, it is plain and manifest that whatever pains a natural man takes in religion, whatever prayers he makes, till he believes in Christ, God is under no manner of obligation to keep him a moment from eternal destruction.

So that thus it is, that natural men are held in the hand of God over the pit of hell; they have deserved the fiery pit, and are already sentenced to it; and God is dreadfully provoked, His anger is as great toward them as to those that are actually suffering the executions of the fierceness of His wrath in hell, and they have done nothing in the least to appease or abate that anger, neither is God in the least bound by any promise to hold them up one moment; the devil is waiting for them, hell is gaping for them, the flames gather and flash about them, and would fain lay hold on them and swallow them up; the fire pent up in their own hearts is struggling to break out; and they have no interest in any Mediator, there are no means within reach that can be any security to them. In short, they have no refuge, nothing to take hold of; all that preserves them every moment is the mere arbitrary will, and uncovenanted, unobliged forbearance of an incensed God.

APPLICATION.

The use may be of awakening to unconverted persons in this congregation. This that you have heard is the case of every one of you that are out of Christ. That world of misery, that lake of burning brimstone, is extended abroad under you. There is the dreadful pit of the glowing flames of the wrath of God; there is hell's wide gaping mouth open; and you have nothing to stand upon, nor any thing to take hold of. There is nothing between you and hell but the air; it is only the power and mere pleasure of God that holds you up.

You probably are not sensible of this; you find you are kept out of hell, but do not see the hand of God in it; but look at other things, as the good state of your bodily constitution, your care of your own life, and the means you use for your own preservation. But indeed these things are nothing; if God should withdraw His hand they would avail no more to keep you from falling than the thin air to hold up a person that is suspended in it.

Your wickedness makes you, as it were, heavy as lead, and to tend downward with great weight and pressure toward hell; and if God should let you go you would immediately sink and swiftly descend and plunge into the bottomless gulf, and your healthy constitution, and your own care and prudence, and best contrivance, and all your righteousness, would have no more influence to uphold you and keep you out of hell than a spider's web would have to stop a falling rock. Were it not that so is the sovereign pleasure of God, the earth would not bear you one moment; for you are a burden to it; the creation groans with you; the creature is made subject to the bondage of your corruption, not willingly; the sun does not willingly shine upon you to give you light to serve sin and Satan; the earth does not willingly yield her increase to satisfy your lusts; nor is it willingly a stage for your wickedness to be acted upon; the air does not willingly serve you for breath to maintain the flame of life in your vitals, while you spend your life in the service of God's enemies. God's creatures are good, and were made for man to serve God with, and do not willingly subserve to any other purpose, and groan when they are abused to purposes so directly contrary to their nature and end. And the world would spew you out, were it not for the sovereign hand of Him who hath subjected it in hope. There are the black clouds of God's wrath now hanging directly over your heads, full of the dreadful storm, and big with thunder; and were it not for the restraining hand of God it would immediately burst forth upon you. The sovereign pleasure of God, for the present, stays His rough wind; otherwise it would come with fury, and your destruction would come like a whirlwind, and you would be like the chaff of the summer thrashing-floor.

The wrath of God is like great waters that are dammed for the present; they increase more and more, and rise higher and higher, till an outlet is given; and the longer the stream is stopped the more rapid and mighty is its course, when once it is let loose. It is true, that judgment against your evil work has not been executed hitherto; the floods of God's vengeance have been withheld; but your guilt in the mean time is constantly increasing, and you are every day treasuring up more wrath; the waters are continually rising, and waxing more and more mighty; and there is nothing but the mere pleasure of God that holds the waters back, that are unwilling to be stopped, and press hard to go forward. If God should only withdraw His hand from the flood-gate, it would immediately fly open, and the fiery floods of the fierceness and wrath of God would rush forth with inconceivable fury, and would come upon you with omnipotent power; and if your strength were ten thousand times greater than it is, yea, ten thousand times greater than the strength of the stoutest, sturdiest devil in hell, it would be nothing to withstand or endure it.

The bow of God's wrath is bent, and the arrow made ready on the string, and justice bends the arrow at your heart, and strains the bow, and it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, and that of an angry God, without any promise or obligation at all, that keeps the arrow one moment from being made drunk with your blood.

Thus are all you that never passed under a great change of heart by the mighty power of the Spirit of God upon your souls; all that were never born again, and made new creatures, and raised from being dead in sin, to a state of new, and before altogether unexperienced light, and life (however you may have reformed your life in many things, and may have had religious affections, and may keep up a form of religion in your families and closets, and in the houses of God, and may be strict in it), you are thus in the hands of an angry God; it is nothing but His mere pleasure that keeps you from being this moment swallowed up in everlasting destruction.

However unconvinced you may now be of the truth of what you hear, by and by you will be fully convinced of it. Those that are gone from being in the like circumstances with you, see that it was so with them; for destruction came suddenly upon most of them when they expected nothing of it, and while they were saying, peace and safety: now they see that those things that they depended on for peace and safety were nothing but thin air and empty shadows.

The God that holds you over the pit of hell much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked; His wrath toward you burns like fire; He looks upon you as worthy of nothing else but to be cast into the fire; He is of purer eyes than to bear you in His sight; you are ten thousand times as abominable in His eyes, as the most hateful and venomous serpent is in ours. You have offended Him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince; and yet it is nothing but His hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment; it is ascribed to nothing else that you did not go to hell the last night that you were suffered to awake again in this world, after you closed your eyes to sleep; and there is no other reason to be given why you have not dropped into hell since you arose in the morning, but that God's hand has held you up; there is no other reason to be given why you have not gone to hell, since you have sat here in the house of God, provoking His pure eye by your sinful wicked manner of attending His solemn worship; yea, there is nothing else that is to be given as a reason why you do not this very moment drop down into hell.

O sinner! consider the fearful danger you are in: it is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath that you are held over in the hands of that God whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you as against many of the damned in hell; you hang by a slender thread, with the flames of Divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it, and burn it asunder; and you have no interest in any mediator, and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you have ever done, nothing that you can do to induce God to spare you one moment.

And consider here more particularly several things concerning that wrath that you are in such danger of.

1. Whose wrath it is. It is the wrath of the infinite God. If it were only the wrath of man, though it were of the most potent prince, it would be comparatively little to be regarded. The wrath of kings is very much dreaded, especially of absolute monarchs, that have the possessions and lives of their subjects wholly in their power, to be disposed of at their mere will. "The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: whoso provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own soul." The subject that very much enrages an arbitrary prince is liable to suffer the most extreme torments that human art can invent, or human power can inflict. But the greatest earthly potentates, in their greatest majesty and strength, and when clothed in their greatest terrors, are but feeble, despicable worms of the dust in comparison of the great and almighty Creator, and King of heaven and earth; it is but little that they can do when most enraged, and when they have exerted the utmost of their fury. All the kings of the earth before God are as grasshoppers; they are nothing, and less than nothing; both their love and their hatred is to be despised. The wrath of the great King of kings is as much more terrible than theirs, as His majesty is greater. "And I say unto you, My friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: fear Him, which after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell: yea, I say unto you, fear Him.

2. It is the fierceness of His wrath that you are exposed to. We often read of the fury of God, as in Isaiah lix. 18. "According to

their deeds, accordingly He will repay fury to His adversaries." So Isaiah lxvi. 15. "For behold the Lord will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire." And so in many other places; so we read of God's fierceness Rev. xix. 15. There we read of "The wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." The words are exceedingly terrible; if it had only been said, "the wrath of God," the words would have implied that which is infinitely dreadful: but it is not only said so, but "the fierceness and wrath of God," the fury of God! the fierceness of Jehovah! Oh how dreadful must that be! Who can utter or conceive what such expressions carry in them! But it is not only said so, but "the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." As though there would be a very great manifestation of His Almighty power in what the fierceness of His wrath should inflict, as though omnipotence should be as it were enraged, and exerted, as men are wont to exert their strength in the fierceness of their wrath. Oh, then, what will be the consequence! What will become of the poor worm that shall suffer it! Whose hands can be strong! And whose heart endure! To what a dreadful, inexpressible, inconceivable depth of misery must the poor creature be sunk who shall be the subject of this!

Consider this, you that are here present, that ye remain in an unregenerate state. That God will execute the fierceness of His anger implies that He will inflict wrath without any pity; when God beholds the ineffable extremity of your case, and sees your torment so vastly disproportioned to your strength, and sees how your poor soul is crushed, and sinks down, as it were, into an infinite gloom, He will have no compassion upon you, He will not forbear the execution of His wrath, or in the least lighten His hand; there shall be no moderation or mercy, nor will God then at all stay His rough winds; He will have no regard to your welfare, nor be at all careful lest you should suffer too much in any other sense, than only that you should not suffer beyond what strict justice requires: nothing shall be withheld because it is too hard for you to bear. "Therefore will I also deal in fury; Mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity; and though they cry in Mine ear with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them." Now God stands ready to pity you; this is a day of mercy; you may cry now with some encouragement of obtaining mercy: but when once the day of mercy is passed, your most lamentable and dolorous cries and shrieks will be in vain; you will be wholly lost and thrown away of God, as to any regard to your welfare; God will have no other use to put you to, but only to suffer misery; you shall be continued in being to no other end, for you will be a vessel of wrath fitted to destruction; and there will be no other use of this vessel but only to be filled full of wrath; God will be so far from pitying you when you cry to Him, that it is said He will only "laugh and mock."

How awful are those words, which are the words of the great God: "I will tread them in Mine anger, and trample them in My fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment." It is perhaps impossible to conceive of words that carry in them greater manifestations of these three things, viz., contempt, and hatred, and fierceness of indignation. If you cry to God to pity you, He will be so far from pitying you in your doleful case, or showing you the least regard or favor, that instead of that, He will only tread you under foot; and though He will know that you can not bear the weight of Omnipotence treading upon you, yet He will not regard that, but He will crush you under His feet without mercy; He will crush out your blood, and make it fly, and it shall be sprinkled on His garments, so as to stain all His raiment. He will not only hate you, but He will have you in the utmost contempt; no place shall be thought fit for you but under His feet, to be trodden down as the mire in the streets.

3. The misery you are exposed to is that which God will inflict to that end, that He might show what that wrath of Jehovah is. God hath had it on His heart to show to angels and men, both how excellent His love is, and also how terrible His wrath is. Sometimes earthly kings have a mind to show how terrible their wrath is, by the extreme punishments they would execute on those that provoke them. Nebuchadnezzar, that mighty and haughty monarch of the Chaldean empire, was willing to show his wrath when enraged with Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego; and accordingly gave orders that the burning fiery furnace shall be heated seven times hotter than it was before; doubtless it was raised to the utmost degree of fierceness that human art could raise it; but the great God is also willing to show His wrath, and magnify His awful Majesty and mighty power in the extreme sufferings of His enemies. "What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" And seeing this is His design, and what He has determined, to show how terrible the unmixed, unrestrained wrath, the fury and fierceness of Jehovah is, He will do it to effect. There will be something accomplished and brought to pass that will be with a witness. When the great and angry God hath risen up and executed His

awful vengeance on the poor sinner, and the wretch is actually suffering the infinite weight and power of His indignation, then will God call upon the whole universe to behold that awful majesty and mighty power that is to be seen in it. "And the people shall be as the burnings of lime, as thorns cut up shall they be burnt in the fire. Hear ye, that are afar off, what I have done; and ye that are near, acknowledge My might. The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites," etc.

Thus it will be with you that are in an unconverted state, if you continue in it; the infinite might, and majesty, and terribleness of the Omnipotent God shall be magnified upon you in the ineffable strength of your torments: you shall be tormented in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and when you shall be in the state of suffering, the glorious inhabitants of heaven shall go forth and look on the awful spectacle, that they may see what the wrath and fierceness of the Almighty is; and when they have seen it, they will fall down and adore that great Power and Majesty: "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against Me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."

4. It is everlasting wrath. It would be dreadful to suffer this fierceness and wrath of Almighty God one moment; but you must suffer it to all eternity: there will be no end to this exquisite, horrible misery; when you look forward, you shall see along forever a boundless duration before you, which will swallow up your thoughts, and amaze your soul; and you will absolutely despair of ever having any deliverance, any end, any mitigation, any rest at all; you will know certainly that you must wear out long ages, millions of millions of ages in wrestling and conflicting with this Almighty, merciless vengeance; and then when you have so done, when so many ages have actually been spent by you in this manner, you will know that all is but a point to what remains, so that your punishment will indeed be infinite. Oh! who can express what the state of a soul in such circumstances is! All that we can possibly say about it, gives but a very feeble, faint representation of it; it is inexpressible and inconceivable: for "who knows the power of God's anger?"

How dreadful is the state of those that are daily and hourly in danger of this great wrath and infinite misery! But this is the dismal case of every soul in this congregation that has not been born again, however moral and strict, sober and religious they may otherwise be. Oh! that you would consider it, whether you be young or old! There is reason to think that there are many in this congregation now hearing this discourse, that will actually be the subjects of this very misery to all eternity. We know not who they are, or in what seats they sit, or what thoughts they now have—it may be they are now at ease, and hear all these things without much disturbance, and are now flattering themselves that they are not the persons; promising themselves that they shall escape. If we knew that there was one person, and but one, in the whole congregation, that was to be the subject of this misery, what an awful thing it would be to think of! If we knew who it was, what an awful sight it would be to see such a person! How might all the rest of the congregation lift up a lamentable and bitter cry over him! But, alas! instead of one, how many is it likely will remember this discourse in hell! And it would be a wonder, if some that are now present should not be in hell in a very short time, before this year is out. And it would be no wonder if some persons, that now sit here in some seats of this meeting-house in health, and quiet and secure, should be there before to-morrow morning!

DISCOURSE SIXTY-EIGHTH.

SAMUEL DAVIES.

Davies was born November 3d, 1724, in Newcastle, then in the province of Pennsylvania, but now in the State of Delaware. He is supposed to have been of Welsh descent. His father died while he was young; but the prayers, instructions, and pious example of his mother were blessed in preparing him for a life of distinguished piety and usefulness. He was converted at about the age of thirteen, and soon after formed the purpose of devoting himself to the ministry. Not being able to obtain a Collegiate education, he prosecuted his studies in a more private manner; and was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Newcastle when he was just twenty-one years of age. At first he visited several vacancies, some in Pennsylvania, some in New Jersey, some in Maryland, where his preaching was much blessed; but in 1748 he located at Hanover, Pennsylvania. In 1753 he was sent to England to solicit funds for Princeton College. On his return he resumed his labors at Hanover, where he continued till chosen President of Princeton College in 1759, as successor of Mr. Edwards. At the close of January, 1761, he was bled for a severe cold; his arm became inflamed, and a violent fever ensued, to which he fell a victim, February 4, 1761, aged 36 years.

Mr. Davies was a model of the most striking pulpit oratory. His frame was tall, erect, and comely; his carriage easy, graceful, and dignified, his voice clear, loud, melodious, and well modulated, his natural genius strong and masculine, his mind clear, his invention quick, his imagination sprightly and florid, his thoughts sublime, and his words chaste, strong, and expressive. He seldom preached without producing some visible impression upon his large audiences. When on a visit to England he was invited to preach before George the Third. His majesty and the youthful queen were so enchanted by his eloquence, that the king interrupted the service with expressions of applause. The preacher, making a pause, and fixing his eye upon the monarch said, "When the lion roars the beasts of the forest tremble; when Jehovah speaks, let the kings of the earth keep silence!" Patrick Henry lived for about ten years in the neighborhood of Davies, and is said to have been stimulated to his masterly efforts by hearing his discourses. He often spoke of the great preacher's abilities with enthusiastic praise.

The sermons of Davies were prepared with great care, and generally carried into the pulpit, but delivered with freedom without being confined to his manuscript. He often extemporized, and with marked effect. There are few discourses more worthy of study and frequent perusal by ministers than those of Samuel Davies. A friend of revivals, writing out of a full heart, burning with zeal for God and love for perishing souls, no one can read his productions without being thrilled, and aroused, and profited. The late William Jay, in his autobiography says, "I confess no discourses ever appeared to me better adapted to awaken the conscience and impress the heart." "They seem to have been written by a man who never looked off from the value of a soul, and the importance of eternity." He has discourses more lofty and overpowering than the one here given; but none more worthy of the reputation which this has acquired as a masterpiece. This sweet discourse, breathing the compassion of Jesus, may fitly succeed Edwards' sermon, flaming and flashing with the wrath of an avenging God.

THE COMPASSION OF CHRIST TO WEAK BELIEVERS.

"A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench."—MATT. xii. 20.

The Lord Jesus possesses all those virtues in the highest perfection, which render Him infinitely amiable, and qualify Him for the administration of a just and gracious government over the world. The virtues of mortals, when carried to a high degree, very often run into those vices which have a kind of affinity to them. "Right, too rigid, hardens into wrong." Strict justice steels itself into excessive severity; and the man is lost in the judge. Goodness and mercy sometimes degenerate into softness and an irrational compassion inconsistent with government. But in Jesus Christ these seemingly opposite virtues center and harmonize in the highest perfection, without running into extremes. Hence He is at once characterized as a Lamb, and as the Lion of the tribe of Judah: a lamb for gentleness toward humble penitents, and a lion to tear His enemies in pieces. Christ is said to "judge and make war," and yet He is called "The Prince of Peace." He will at length show Himself terrible to the workers of iniquity; and the terrors of the Lord are a very proper topic whence to persuade men; but now He is patient toward all men, and He is all love and tenderness toward the meanest penitent. The meekness and gentleness of Christ is to be the pleasing entertainment of this day; and I enter upon it with a particular view to those mourning, desponding souls among us, whose weakness renders them in great need of strong consolation. To such in particular, I address the words of my text, "A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench."

This is a part of the Redeemer's character, as delineated nearly three thousand years ago, by the evangelical prophet Isaiah; and it is expressly applied to Him by St. Matthew: "Behold," says the Father, "My Servant whom I have chosen" for the important undertaking of saving the guilty sons of men; "My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased;" My very soul is well pleased with His faithful discharge of the important office He has undertaken. "I will put My Spirit upon Him;" that is, I will completely furnish Him by the gifts of My Spirit for His high character; and "He shall show judgment to the Gentiles;" to the poor benighted Gentiles He shall show the light of salvation, by revealing the Gospel to them; which, in the style of the Old Testament, may be called His judgments. Or, He will show and execute the judgment of this world by casting out its infernal prince, who had so long exercised an extensive cruel tyranny over it. "He shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any man hear His voice in the street;" that is, though He enters the world as a mighty prince and conqueror, to establish a kingdom of righteousness, and overthrow the kingdom of darkness, yet He will not introduce it with the noisy terrors and thunders of war, but shall show Himself mild and gentle as the prince of peace. Or the connection may lead us to understand these words in a different sense, namely, He shall do nothing with clamorous ostentation, nor proclaim His wonderful works, when it shall answer no valuable end. Accordingly the verse of our text stands thus connected: "Great multitudes followed Him; and He healed them all, and charged them that they should not make Him known. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, —He shall not cry, neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets;" that is, He shall not publish His miracles with noisy triumph in the streets and other public places. And when it is said, "He shall not strive," it may refer to His inoffensive, passive behavior toward His enemies that were plotting His death. For thus we may connect this quotation from Isaiah with the preceding history in the chapter of our text: "Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against Him, how they might destroy Him. But when

Jesus knew it," instead of praying to His Father for a guard of angels, or employing His own miraculous power to destroy them, "He withdrew Himself from thence; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, saying—He shall not strive."

The general meaning of my text seems to be contained in this observation; "That the Lord Jesus has the tenderest and most compassionate regard to the feeblest penitent, however oppressed and desponding; and that He will approve and cherish the least spark of true love toward Himself."

A bruised reed seems naturally to represent a soul at once feeble in itself, and crushed with a burden; a soul both weak and oppressed. The reed is a slender, frail vegetable in itself, and therefore a very proper image to represent a soul that is feeble and weak. A bruised reed is still more frail, hangs its head, and is unable to stand without some prop. And what can be a more lively emblem of a poor soul, not only weak in itself, but bowed down and broken under a load of sin and sorrow, that droops and sinks, and is unable to stand without Divine support? Strength may bear up under a burden, or struggle with it, till it has thrown it off; but oppressed weakness, frailty under a burden, what can be more pitiable? and yet this is the case of many a poor penitent. He is weak in himself, and in the mean time crushed under a heavy weight of guilt and distress.

And what would become of such a frail oppressed creature, if, instead of raising him up and supporting him, Jesus should tread and crush him under the foot of His indignation? But though a reed, especially a bruised reed, is an insignificant thing, of little or no use, yet "a bruised reed He will not break," but He raises it up with a gentle hand, and enables it to stand, though weak in itself, and easily crushed in ruin.

Perhaps the imagery, when drawn at length, may be this: "The Lord Jesus is an Almighty Conqueror, marches in state through our world; and here and there a bruised reed lies in His way. But instead of disregarding it, or trampling it under foot, He takes care not to break it: He raises up the drooping straw, trifling as it is, and supports it with His gentle hand." Thus, poor broken-hearted penitents, thus He takes care of you, and supports you, worthless and trifling as you are. Though you seem to lie in the way of His justice, and it might tread you with its heavy foot, yet He not only does not crush you, but takes you up, and inspires you with strength to bear your burden and flourish again.

Or perhaps the imagery may be derived from the practice of the ancient shepherds, who were wont to amuse themselves with the music of a pipe of reed or straw; and when it was bruised they broke it, or threw it away as useless. But the bruised reed shall not be broken by this Divine Shepherd of souls. The music of broken sighs and groans is indeed all that the broken reed can afford Him: the notes are but low, melancholy, and jarring: and yet He will not break the instrument, but He will repair and tune it, till it is fit to join in the concert of angels on high; and even now its humble strains are pleasing to His ears. Surely every broken heart among us must revive, while contemplating this tender and moving imagery.

The other emblem is equally significant and affecting. "The smoking flax shall He not quench." It seems to be an allusion to the wick of a candle or lamp, the flame of which is put out, but it still smokes, and retains a little fire which may be again blown into a flame, or rekindled by the application of more fire. Many such dying snuffs or smoking wicks are to be found in the candlesticks of the churches, and in the lamps of the sanctuary. The flame of Divine love is just expiring, it is sunk into the socket of a corrupt heart, and produces no clear steady blaze, but only a smoke that is disagreeable, although it shows that a spark of the sacred fire yet remains; or it produces a faint quivering flame that dies away, then catches and revives, and seems unwilling to be quenched entirely. The devil and the world raise many storms of temptation to blow it out; and a corrupt heart, like a fountain, pours out water to quench it. But even this smoking flax, this dying snuff, Jesus will not quench, but He blows it up into a flame, and pours in the oil of His grace to recruit and nourish it. He walks among the golden candlesticks, and trims the lamps of His sanctuary. Where He finds empty vessels without oil or a spark of heavenly fire, like those of the foolish virgins, He breaks the vessels, or throws them out of His house. But where He finds the least spark of true grace, where He discovers but the glimpse of sincere love to Him, where He sees the principle of true piety, which, though just expiring, yet renders the heart susceptive of Divine love, as a candle just put out is easily rekindled, there He will strengthen the things which remain and are ready to die: He will blow up the dying snuff to a lively flame, and cause it to shine brighter and brighter to the perfect day. Where there is the least principle of true holiness He will cherish it. He will furnish the expiring lamp with fresh supplies of the oil of grace, and of heavenly fire; and all the storms that beat upon it shall not be able to put it out, because sheltered by His hand.

I hope, my dear brethren, some of you begin already to feel the pleasing energy of this text. Are you not ready to say, Blessed Jesus! is this Thy true character? Then Thou art just such a Saviour as I want, and I most willingly give up myself to Thee. You are sensible you are at best but a bruised reed, a feeble, shattered, useless thing: an untunable, broken pipe of straw, that can make no proper music for the entertainment of your Divine Shepherd. Your heart is at best but smoking flax, where the love of God often appears like a dying snuff; or an expiring flame that quivers and catches, and hovers over the lamp, just ready to go out. Such some of you probably feel yourselves to be. Well, and what think ye of Christ? "He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax;" and therefore, may not even your guilty eyes look to this gentle Saviour with encouraging hope? May you not say to Him, with the sweet singer of Israel, in his last moments, "He is all my salvation, and all my desire.

In prosecuting this subject I intend to illustrate the character of a weak believer, as represented in my text, and then to illustrate the care and compassion of Jesus Christ even for such a poor weakling.

I. I am to illustrate the character of a weak believer, as represented in my text, by "a bruised reed, and smoking flax."

The metaphor of a bruised reed, as I observed, seems most naturally to convey the idea of a state of weakness and oppression. And, therefore, in illustrating it I am naturally led to describe the various weaknesses which a believer sometimes painfully feels, and to point out the heavy burdens which he sometimes groans under; I say sometimes, for at other times even the weak believer finds himself strong, "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might, and strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man." The joy of the Lord is His strength: and He "can do all things through Christ strengthening Him." Even the oppressed believer at times feels himself delivered from his burden, and he can lift up his drooping head, and walk upright. But, alas! the burden returns, and crushes him again. And under some burden or other many honest-hearted believers groan out the most part of their lives.

Let us now see what are those weaknesses which a believer feels and laments. He finds himself weak in knowledge; a simple child in the knowledge of God and Divine things. He is weak in love; the sacred flame does not rise with a perpetual fervor, and diffuse itself through all his devotions, but at times it languishes and dies away into a smoking snuff. He is weak in faith; he can not keep a strong hold of the Almighty, can not suspend his all upon His promises with cheerful confidence, nor build a firm, immovable fabric of hope upon the rock Jesus Christ. He is weak in hope; his hope is dashed with rising billows of fears and jealousies, and sometimes just overset. He is weak in joy; he can not extract the sweets of Christianity, nor taste the comforts of his religion. He is weak in zeal for God and the interests of His kingdom; he would wish himself always a flaming seraph, always glowing with zeal, always unwearied in serving his God, and promoting the designs of redeeming love in the world; but, alas! at times his zeal, with his love, languishes and dies away into a smoking snuff. He is weak in repentance; troubled with that plague of plagues, a hard heart. He is weak in the conflict with indwelling sin, that is perpetually making insurrections within him. He is weak in resisting temptations; which crowd upon him from without, and are often likely to overwhelm him. He is weak in courage to encounter the king of terrors, and venture through the valley of the shadow of death. He is weak in prayer, in importunity, in filial boldness, in approaching the mercy-seat. He is weak in abilities to endeavor the conversion of sinners and save souls from death. In short, he is weak in every thing in which he should be strong. He has indeed, like the church of Philadelphia, a little strength, and at times he feels it; but oh! it seems to him much too little for the work he has to do. These weaknesses or defects the believer feels, painfully and tenderly feels, and bitterly laments. A sense of them keeps him upon his guard against temptations: he is not venturesome in rushing into the combat. He would not parley with temptation, but would keep out of its way; nor would he run the risk of a defeat by an ostentatious experiment of his strength. This sense of weakness also keeps him dependent upon Divine strength. He clings to that support given to St. Paul in an hour of hard conflict, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness;" and when a sense of his weakness has this happy effect upon him, then with St. Paul he has reason to say, "When I am weak, then am I strong."

I say the believer feels and laments these weaknesses; and this is the grand distinction in this case between him and the rest of the world. They are the weak too, much weaker than he; nay, they have, properly, no spiritual strength at all; but, alas! they do not feel their weakness, but the poor vain creatures boast of their strength, and think they can do great things when they are disposed for them. Or if their repeated falls and defeats by temptation extort them to a confession of their weakness, they plead it rather as an excuse than lament it as at once a crime and a calamity. But the poor believer tries no such artifice to extenuate his guilt. He is sensible that even his weakness itself has guilt in it, and therefore he laments it with ingenuous sorrow among his other sins.

Now, have I not delineated the very character of some of you? such weaklings, such frail reeds you feel yourselves to be! Well, hear this kind assurance—Jesus will not break such a feeble reed, but He will support and strengthen it.

But you, perhaps, not only feel you are weak, but you are oppressed with some heavy burden or other. You are not only a reed for weakness, but you are a bruised reed, trodden under foot, crushed under a load. Even this is no unusual or discouraging case; for

The weak believer often feels himself crushed under some heavy burden. The frail reed is often bruised; bruised under a due sense of guilt. Guilt lies heavy at times upon his conscience, and he can not throw it off. Bruised with a sense of remaining sin, which he finds still strong within him, and which at times prevails and treads him under foot. Bruised under a burden of wants, the want of tenderness of heart, of ardent love to God and mankind, the want of heavenly-mindedness and victory over the world; the want of conduct and resolution to direct his behavior in a passage so intricate and difficult, and the want of nearer intercourse with the Father and His Spirit; in short, a thousand pressing wants crush and bruise him. He also feels his share of the calamities of life in common with other men. But these burdens I shall take no further notice of, because they are not peculiar to him as a believer, nor do they lie heaviest upon his heart. He could easily bear up under the calamities of life if his spiritual wants were supplied, and the burden of guilt and sin were removed. Under these last he groans and sinks. Indeed these burdens lie with all their full weight upon the world around him; but they are dead in trespasses and sins, and feel them not; they do not groan under them, nor labor for deliverance from them. They lie contented under them, with more stupidity than beasts of burden, till they sink under the intolerable load into the depth of misery. But the poor believer is not so stupid, and his tender heart feels the burden and groans under it. "We that are in this tabernacle," says St. Paul, "do groan, being burdened." The believer understands feelingly that pathetic exclamation, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He can not be easy till his conscience is appeased by a well-attested pardon through the blood of Christ; and the sins he feels working within him are a real burden and uneasiness to him, though they should never break out into action, and publicly dishonor his holy profession.

And is not this the very character of some poor oppressed creatures among you? I hope it is. You may look upon your case to be very discouraging, but Jesus looks upon it in a more favorable light; He looks upon you as proper objects of His compassionate care. Bruised as you are, He will bind up and support you.

II. But I proceed to take a view of the character of a weak Christian, as represented in the other metaphor of my text, namely, "smoking flax." The idea most naturally conveyed by this metaphor is, that of grace true and sincere, but languishing and just expiring, like a candle just blown out, which still smokes and retains a feeble spark of fire. It signifies a susceptibility of a further grace, or a readiness to catch that sacred fire, as a candle just put out is easily rekindled. This metaphor, therefore, leads me to describe the reality of religion in a low degree, or to delineate the true Christian in his most languishing hours. And in so doing I shall mention those dispositions and exercises which the weakest Christian feels, even in these melancholy seasons; for even in these he widely differs still from the most polished hypocrite in his highest improvements. On this subject let me solicit your most serious attention; for if you have the least spark of real religion within you, you are now likely to discover it, as I am not going to rise to the high attainments of Christians of the first rank, but to stoop to the character of the meanest. Now the peculiar dispositions and exercises of heart which such in some measure feel, you may discover from the following short history of their case.

The weak Christian, in such languishing hours, does indeed sometimes fall into such a state of carelessness and insensibility that he has very few and but superficial exercises of mind about divine things. But generally he feels an uneasiness, an emptiness, an anxiety within, under which he droops and pines away, and all the world can not heal the disease. He has chosen the blessed God as his supreme happiness; and when he can not derive happiness from that source, all the sweets of created enjoyments become insipid to him, and can not fill up the prodigious void which the absence of the Supreme Good leaves in his craving soul. Sometimes his anxiety is indistinct and confused, and he hardly knows what ails him; but at other times he feels it is for God, the living God, that his soul pants. The evaporations of this smoking flax naturally ascend toward heaven. He knows that he never can be happy till he can enjoy the communications of divine love. Let him turn which way he will, he can find no solid ease, no rest, till he comes to this center again.

Even at such times he can not be thoroughly reconciled to his sins. He may be parleying with some of them in an unguarded hour, and seem to be negotiating a peace; but the truce is soon ended, and they are at variance again. The enmity of a renewed heart soon rises against this old enemy. And there is this circumstance remarkable in the believer's hatred and opposition to sin, that they do not proceed principally, much less entirely, from a fear of punishment, but from a generous sense of its intrinsic baseness and ingratitude, and its contrariety to the holy nature of God. This is the ground of his hatred to sin, and sorrow for it; and this shows that there is at least a spark of true grace in his heart, and that he does not act altogether from the low, interested, and mercenary principles of nature.

At such times he is very jealous of the sincerity of his religion, afraid that all his past experiences were delusive, and afraid that, if he should die in his present state, he would be forever miserable. A very anxious state is this! The stupid world can lie secure while this grand concern lies in the most dreadful suspense. But the tender-hearted believer is not capable of such fool-hardiness: he shudders at the thought of everlasting separation from that God and Saviour whom he loves. He loves Him, and therefore the fear of separation from Him fills him with all the anxiety of bereaved love. This to him is the most painful ingredient of the punishment of hell. Hell would be a sevenfold hell to a lover of God, because it is a state of banishment from Him whom he loves. He could forever languish and pine away under the consuming distresses of widowed love, which those that love him can not feel. And has God kindled the sacred flame in his heart in order to render him capable of the more exquisite pain! Will He exclude from His presence the poor creature that clings to Him, and languishes for Him! No, the flax that does but smoke with His love was never intended to be fuel for hell; but He will blow it up into a flame, and nourish it till it mingles with the seraphic ardors in the region of perfect love.

The weak believer seems sometimes driven by the tempest of lusts and temptation from off the rock of Jesus Christ. But he makes toward it on the stormy billows, and labors to lay hold upon it, and recover his station there; for he is sensible there is no other foundation of safety; but that without Christ he must perish forever. It is the habitual disposition of the believer's soul to depend upon Jesus Christ alone. He retains a kind of direction or tendency toward Him, like the needle touched with the loadstone toward the pole; and if his heart is turned from its course, it trembles and quivers till it gains its favorite point again, and fixes there. Sometimes indeed a consciousness of guilt renders him shy of his God and Saviour; and after such base ingratitude he is ashamed to go to Him; but at length necessity as well as inclination constrains him, and he is obliged to cry out, "Lord, to whom shall I go? Thou hast the words of eternal life:" in Thee alone I find rest to my soul; and therefore to Thee I must fly, though I am ashamed and confounded to appear in Thy presence.

In short, the weakest Christian upon earth sensibly feels that his comfort rises and falls, as he lives nearer to or further from his God. The love of God has such a habitual predominancy even in his heart, that nothing in the world, nor even all the world together, can fill up His place. No, when He is gone, heaven and earth can not replenish the mighty void. Even the weakest Christian upon earth longs to be delivered from sin, from all sin, without exception: and a body of death hanging about him is the burden of his life. Even the poor, jealous, languishing Christian has his hope, all the little hope that he has, built upon Jesus Christ. Even this smoking flax sends up some exhalations of love toward heaven. Even the poor creature that often fears he is altogether a slave to sin, honestly, though feebly labors to be holy, to be holy as an angel, yea, to be holy, as God is holy. He has a heart that feels the attractive charms of holiness, and he is so captivated by it, that sin can never recover its former place in his heart; no, the tyrant is forever dethroned, and the believer would rather die than yield himself a tame slave to the usurped tyranny again.

Thus I have delineated to you, in the plainest manner I could, the character of a weak Christian. Some of you, I am afraid, can not lay claim even to this low character. If so, you may be sure you are not true Christians even of the lowest rank. You may be sure you have not the least spark of true religion in your hearts, but are utterly destitute of it.

But some of you, I hope, can say, "Well, after all my doubts and fears, if this be the character of a true, though weak Christian, then I may humbly hope that I am one. I am indeed confirmed in it, that I am less than the least of all other saints upon the face of the earth, but yet I see that I am a saint; for thus has my heart been exercised, even in my dark and languishing hours. This secret uneasiness and pining anxiety, this thirst for God, for the living God, this tendency of soul toward Jesus Christ, this implacable enmity to sin, this panting and struggling after holiness, these things have I often felt." And have you indeed? Then away with your doubts and jealousies; away with your fears and despondencies! There is at least an immortal spark kindled in your hearts, which the united power of men and devils, of sin and temptation, shall never be able to quench. No, it shall yet rise into a flame, and burn with seraphic ardors forever.

For your further encouragement, I proceed,

II. To illustrate the care and compassion of Jesus Christ for such poor weaklings as you.

This may appear a needless task to some: for who is there that does not believe it? But to such would I say, it is no easy thing to establish a trembling soul in the full belief of this truth. It is easy for one that does not see his danger, and does not feel his extreme need of salvation, and the difficulty of the work, to believe that Christ is willing and able to save him. But O! to a poor soul, deeply sensible of its condition, this is no easy matter. Besides, the heart may need be more deeply affected with this truth, though the understanding should need no further arguments of the speculative kind for its conviction; and to impress this truth is my present design.

For this purpose I need but read and paraphrase to you a few of the many kind declarations and assurances which Jesus has given us in His Word, and relate the happy experiences of some of His saints there recorded, who found Him true and faithful to His word.

The Lord Jesus Christ seems to have a peculiar tenderness for the poor, the mourners, the broken-hearted; and these are peculiarly the objects of His mediatorial office. "The Lord hath anointed Me (says He) to preach good tidings to the meek; He hath sent Me (all the way from My native heaven down to earth, upon this compassionate errand) to bind up the broken-hearted, to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." "Thus saith the Lord (in strains of majesty that become Him), The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool: where is the house that ye build unto Me? and where is the place of My rest? For all things hath My hands made, saith the Lord." Had He spoken uniformly in this majestic language to us guilty worms, the declaration might have overwhelmed us with awe, but could not have inspired us with hope. But He advances Himself thus high, on purpose to let us see how low He can stoop. Hear the encouraging sequel of this His majestic speech: "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word." Let heaven and earth wonder that He will look down through all the shining ranks of angels, and look by princes and nobles, to fix His eye upon this man, this poor man, this contrite, broken-hearted, trembling creature. He loves to dwell upon this subject, and therefore you hear it again in the same prophecy: "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy,"—what does He say? "I dwell in the high and holy place." This is said in character. This is a dwelling in some measure worthy the inhabitant. But O! will He stoop to dwell in a lower mansion, or pitch His tent among mortals? yes, He dwells not only in His "high and holy place," but also "with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." He charges Peter to "feed His lambs" as well as His sheep; that is, to take the tenderest care even of the weakest in His flock. And He severely rebukes the shepherds of Israel, "Because (says He) ye have not strengthened the diseased, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken." But what an amiable reverse in the character of the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls! "Behold (says Isaiah) the Lord will come with a strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him: behold His reward is with Him, and His work is before Him." How justly may we tremble at this proclamation of the approaching God! for who can stand when He appeareth? But how agreeably are our fears disappointed in what follows? If He comes to take vengeance on His enemies, He also comes to show mercy to the meanest of His people. "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd, He shall gather the lambs with His arms, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young," that is, He shall exercise the tenderest and most compassionate care toward the meanest and weakest of His flock. "He looked down (says the Psalmist) from the height of His sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth;" not to view the grandeur and pride of courts and kings, nor the heroic exploits of conquerors, but "to hear the groaning of the prisoner, to loose those that are appointed to die. He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer. This shall be written for the generation to come." It was written for your encouragement, my brethren. Above three thousand years ago, this encouraging passage was entered into the sacred records for the support of poor desponding souls in Virginia, in the ends of the earth. O what an early provident care does God show for His people! There are none of the seven churches of Asia so highly commended by Christ as that of Philadelphia; and yet in commending her, all He can say is, "Thou hast a little strength." "I know thy works; behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it, for thou hast a little strength." O how acceptable is a little strength to Jesus Christ, and how ready is He to improve it. "He giveth power to the faint (says Isaiah), and to them that have no might He increaseth strength." Hear further what words of grace and truth flowed from the lips of Jesus. "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest: for I am meek and lowly in heart." "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in nowise cast out." "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." "Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely." O what strong consolation is here! what exceedingly great and precious promises are these! I might easily add to the catalogue, but these may suffice.

Let us now see how His people in every age have ever found these promises made good. Here David may be consulted *instar omnium*, and he will tell you, pointing to himself, "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard and delivered him out of his troubles." St. Paul, in the midst of affliction, calls God "the Father of mercies, and God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation." "God (says he), that comforteth those that are cast down, comforteth us." What a sweetly emphatic declaration is this! "God, the comforter of the humble, comforted us." He is not only the Lord of hosts, the King of kings, the Creator of the world, but among His more august characters He assumes this title, the Comforter of "the humble." Such St. Paul found Him in an hour of temptation, when he had this supporting answer to his repeated prayer for deliverance, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Since this was the case, since his weakness was more than supplied by the strength of Christ, and was a foil to set it off, St. Paul seems quite regardless what infirmities he labored under. Nay, "Most gladly (says he) will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities—for when I am weak, then am I strong." He could take no pleasure in feeling himself weak: but the mortification was made up by the pleasure he found in leaning upon this almighty support. His wounds were painful to him: but oh! the pleasure he found in feeling the Divine Physician dressing his wounds, in some measure swallowed up the pain. It was probably experience, as well as inspiration, that dictated to the apostle that amiable character of Christ, that He is a "merciful and faithful High Priest, who being Himself tempted, knows how to succor them that are tempted." And "we have not a high priest which can not be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

But why need I multiply arguments? Go to His cross, and there learn His love and compassion, from His groans and wounds, and blood, and death. Would He hang there in such agony for sinners if He were not willing to save them, and cherish every good principle in them? There you may have much the same evidence of His compassion as Thomas had of His resurrection; you may look into His hands, and see the print of the nails; and into His side, and see the scar of the spear; which loudly proclaims his readiness to pity and help you.

And now, poor, trembling, doubting souls, what hinders but you should rise up your drooping head, and take courage? May you not venture your souls into such compassionate and faithful hands? Why should the bruised reed shrink from Him, when He comes not to tread it down, but raise it up?

As I am really solicitous that impenitent hearts among us should be pierced with the medicinal anguish and sorrow of conviction and repentance—and the most friendly heart can not form a kinder wish for them—so I am truly solicitous that every honest soul, in which there is the least spark of true piety, should enjoy the pleasure of it. It is indeed to be lamented that they who have a title to so much happiness should enjoy so little of it; it is very incongruous that they should go bowing their head in their way toward heaven, as if they were hastening to the place of execution, and that they should serve so good a Master with such heavy hearts. O lift up the hands that hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees! "Comfort ye, comfort ye, My people, saith your God. Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." Trust in your all-sufficient Redeemer; trust in Him though He should slay you.

And do not indulge causeless doubts and fears concerning your sincerity. When they arise in your minds, examine them, and search whether there be any sufficient reason for them; and if you discover there is not, then reject them and set them at defiance, and entertain your hopes in spite of them, and say with the Psalmist, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him, the health of my countenance, and my God

DISCOURSE SIXTY-NINTH

JOHN H. LIVINGSTON, D.D., S.T.P.

The celebrated President of Queen's College, New Jersey, was born in 1747, and regularly graduated at Yale College. In May, 1766, he went to Holland to prosecute his studies in theology in the University of Utrecht, where he remained four years. Upon his return to America, he became the pastor of the Reformed Dutch Church, in the city of New York. At this period the Dutch churches in the United States, were divided into the "Conferentic and Coetus parties." It was mainly by means of Dr. Livingston that a happy union was effected in 1772, and the Dutch Church became independent of the Classis in Amsterdam. In 1784 he was appointed Theological Professor in connection with the denomination to which he belonged. The duties of minister and professor he performed until 1810, when he was appointed President of Queen's College, in which position he remainted till the time of his decease in 1825.

But few of the sermons of Dr. Livingston have been preserved, which is much to be regretted. That which is here given, was preached before the N. Y. Missionary Society, April 3, 1804; and besides its high intrinsic value, has a special historic interest, from its connection with the great missionary movements in this country. It made a profound impression at the time of its delivery; but afterward, in the printed form, it reached Williams College, and fell into the hands of some of the pious students, among whom were Samuel J. Mills, Gordon Hall, and Richards. These young men took with them this very sermon in their visits to the meadow on the bank of the Hoosac river, whither they repaired Saturday afternoons for consultation and prayer as to a mission to the heathen. Here, by the famous hay-stacks, under which they gathered, they pored over these words of wisdom and fervid eloquence on a theme, which, in those days, was comparatively new. How much is to be attributed, therefore, to the influence of this discourse, is known only to the Great Head of the Church.

A few paragraphs toward the conclusion, of a more local character, are omitted. It may be proper, also, to add, that we have gathered the facts just referred to as to this sermon, from the venerable Dr. Ludlow, Professor in the Theological Seminary, New Brunswick, N. J.

THE FLIGHT OF THE ANGEL WITH THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL.

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying, with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come; and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."—REVELATION, xiv. 6, 7.

The glory of God, the love of Christ, and the salvation of sinners, suggest constraining motives for propagating the Gospel. The command to "teach all nations," and the promise that the word shall "not return void," present a warrant and encouragement to vigorous exertions for converting the heathen. Christians have always recognized the obligation, and professed a submission to this duty; yet they have criminally neglected the means, or ignobly slumbered in the work.

In the dark period of ignorance and oppression, when the Church fled before an implacable enemy, it was impossible to devise liberal plans, or prosecute any benevolent design for the enlargement of the Redeemer's kingdom. Her situation precluded every generous effort. But why, in more prosperous times, did believers abate in their zeal? Why for the space of three centuries, when placed beyond the reach of persecution, have no strenuous measures been adopted for extending the knowledge of the Saviour? Men, eminent for their piety and talents, have, in succession, been raised up in the Church. Many, during this long interval, have defended the truth, and, by their invaluable writings, recommended the excellence and power of godliness. Faithful and learned ministers have indefatigably labored; and the Lord hath often "sent a plentiful rain," and confirmed "His inheritance when it was weary;" but still an extensive promulgation of the Gospel has not been seriously attempted. Nothing since the primitive ages of Christianity, deserving the name, has appeared, until the present period. Now, at a season the most unpromising, when wars, revolutions, and confusion prevail; now, when infidelity assumes a formidable aspect, increases its votaries, and arrogantly threatens to crush revealed religion; at this very time, under all these inauspicious circumstances, see the Church "enlarging the place of her tent, and stretching forth the curtains of her habitation! She breaks forth on the right hand and on the left, to inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited." All who embrace the doctrines of grace, in every nation, seem inspired with the same spirit. Vast plans are formed, immense expenses incurred, and the most distant continents and islands become the objects of attention. Now the deplorable state of those who "dwell in the land of the shadow of death," and perish for lack of knowledge, excites compassion. Societies are instituted to facilitate the work; and men, zealous and intrepid in the service of their Lord, readily offer to visit the utmost ends of the earth, and cheerfully submit to the toils and dangers inseparable from missionary labors.

Such views and efforts constitute a distinguished epoch in the history of the Church. Events so singular, and in their consequences so interesting, create serious inquiries. The assiduous observer of Divine Providence, losing sight of subordinate agents, looks up, and asks, What is God doing? Why are the intricate wheels which, with respect to this important object, have so long seemed stationary, now put in motion? Is there nothing in the word of God, is there no promise, no prediction, which will illustrate the procedure of Providence, and inform His people of the rise and progress, the source and tendency of this astonishing movement? From the prophecies of the Old Testament respecting the kingdom of Christ, a satisfactory reply can not be obtained. Those prophecies refer chiefly to the beginning or to the conclusion of the Gospel dispensation. Some were accomplished in the days of the apostles and their immediate successors. The most of them look forward to a distant period. Very little concerning the intermediate space, or the train of events which mark the approach, and are to usher in the glory of the latter days, can be from them especially collected. Our blessed Lord, in many of His parables, delineates the gradual and extensive progress of His kingdom. In the Epistles a formidable adversary is mentioned, "Whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming." But our most decisive information is to be derived from the Apocalypse. The various vicissitudes which, in succession, designate the present dispensation of the Church, and the time when the promises will be fulfilled, are there more pointedly described than in any other portion of the sacred Scriptures. To a prophecy in this book I have presumed, my brethren, upon this occasion, to request your attention; a prophecy in which you will find an answer to your inquiries, and from which it is my design to deduce a new motive for strenuous and persevering exertions in your missionary engagements.

Convinced of the difficulties which unavoidably attend the explanation of prophecies not yet accomplished, and persuaded of a prevailing disposition to magnify presenting events; aware of the propensity which urges to anticipate what is future and sensible of the peculiar circumspection with which we ought to comment upon the book of Revelation, I approach my subject with humility and diffidence; yet not without hope that the meaning of the Holy Spirit, in the passage selected for our meditation, is rightly apprehended, and that something may be adduced for instruction and edification. Let us endeavor,

I. To ascertain the object of this prophecy; and then,

II. Investigate the period of its accomplishment.

First. To ascertain the object of this prophecy, and determine what event is here predicted, let it be observed, that in this chapter several distinct visions are recorded, which follow each other in uninterrupted succession, referring to events, which, in that very order, will be accomplished; that the vision now under consideration is the second, and, in regard to its meaning and precise object, is uninfluenced by what precedes or follows.

John once "beheld and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying, with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth!" The characters and scene now before us are of a different nature; instead of woe and alarm, they are replete with glad tidings and consolation. "I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth." In this text the hieroglyphical and alphabetical language both occur. A few symbols are first introduced, after which an explanation succeeds in the ordinary style.

The symbols are, heaven and an angel, bearing a precious treasure, "flying in the midst of heaven," and crying with a "loud voice." Heaven is often, throughout the Scripture, used literally to indicate the place of glory, the beatific vision, the mansion of the blessed. In the passage before us it is a symbol, and means the Church under the New Testament dispensation. The "midst of heaven," then, is the midst of the Christian Churches. Angel is an official term; it is frequently applied to those spiritual and celestial beings who are sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation; but the word expresses not so much the nature as the character and duty of those who are employed as messengers. It is here a symbol, and represents the ministers of the Gospel, the messengers of the Lord to His people; and means not one particular minister, but a Gospel ministry in the aggregate. Of this a satisfactory explanation occurs in the second and third chapters of this book, where the symbol always refers to the ministry of the Churches. Flying is the figure of speed. A continued flying indicates an uninterrupted and unceasing progress. The loud voice expresses earnestness, zeal and authority.

From the symbolical terms, we then collect, that John foresaw a period when a zealous ministry would arise in the midst of the churches, with a new and extraordinary spirit; a ministry singular in its views and exertions, and remarkable for its plans and success; a ministry which would arrest the public attention, and be a prelude to momentous changes in the Church and in the world.

The literal explanation removes every doubt respecting the meaning of these symbols. What is the treasure the angel bears? What does he proclaim with so loud a voice? To whom is his message directed? Each of these is here determined. The angel has the everlasting Gospel to preach: this is his treasure. He calls to the practice of the essential duties of true religion, and announces the hour of God's judgment: this is the import of his proclamation. He is commissioned to visit every nation and people on the earth: to them his message is directed. Some of these articles deserve a minute discussion; but we must be contented with a few brief observations upon each.

1. The Gospel signifies good tidings, tidings of great joy, of salvation for lost sinners, salvation from great misery, procured by a great price, a great salvation. To preach this Gospel is officially to declare the fact, and authoritatively to command and persuade sinners to be reconciled to God. So the celestial angel preached the Gospel to the Shepherds in the field of Bethlehem, when he published the birth of the Saviour. So the apostolic angels preached the Gospel when they went forth "as embassadors for Christ, and inculcated repentance and faith. So the ordinary angels of the churches have continued in every age to preach the Gospel, as far as they have faithfully professed and taught the doctrines of Jesus and His apostles.

This Gospel is here called everlasting, not merely because it was devised in the eternal counsel of peace between the Father and the Son, and because it is established by an everlasting Covenant, which renders all the benefits well ordered, sure, and perpetual; but it is thus denominated with particular emphasis in this prophecy, to indicate that the Gospel, which should go forth from the midst of the churches, and be sent to all the nations of the earth, would be the same Gospel which had always been maintained by the faithful followers of the Redeemer; the same Gospel which was "preached before unto Abraham;" the same which all believers embraced under the Old Testament; the same which the apostles preached and the primitive Christians professed; the same to which the sealed of the Lord bore witness during the persecution of antichrist; the same for which the churches at the Reformation protested, and which has since, by many of those churches, been preserved in its purity. The very same weapons, and no other, which had been "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds" heretofore, should now be effectually employed. This ascertains that, at the period intended in the vision, the doctrines of grace would be faithfully preached; that the missionaries sent out from the midst of the churches would be, like Barnabas, "good men, full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith;" that they would not accommodate their message to the pride of philosophers, to the prejudice of infidels, or the bigotry of idolaters? but honestly, plainly, and boldly preach "Christ and Him crucified;" Christ, "the way, the truth, and the life," by whom alone sinners can come to the Father; that without flattery or disguise, they would call transgressors to repentance, and offer a Saviour to the chief of sinners.

2. To what doth the angel call? What is the import of his proclamation? In three comprehensive sentences a summary of the whole is exhibited—"Fear God; give glory to Him;" and "worship Him." By the fear of God, the whole of true religion, as it respects principles and practice, is often expressed; particularly a veneration for the infinite majesty of Jehovah, and a holy dread of His judgments. "The Lord is the true God, He is the living God, and everlasting King; at His wrath the earth shall tremble. Who would not fear Thee, O King of nations? For to Thee doth it appertain." But the fear particularly inculcated by the Gospel is here especially intended; not a servile dread, which urges awakened sinners to despair, and extinguishes devotion; but a holy reverence, blended with such perfect love as casteth out slavish fear. The spirit of adoption seals the forgiveness of sins—is an earnest of acceptance "in the beloved"—and excites in His people a filial fear. "There is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared."

"Give glory to Him," is added by the angel, as another comprehensive summary of the Gospel call. In all His Divine attributes God is infinitely glorious. The heavens declare His glory. The whole earth is full of His glory. All His works praise Him. He is glorious in His holiness and fearful in His praises. But in the face of Jesus Christ the glory of God shines most conspicuously. In the salvation of guilty, depraved, and helpless transgressors, through the imputed righteousness of the blessed Immanuel, glory redounds to God in the highest. The Gospel displays "the glory of His majesty;" and wherever it is rendered the wisdom and power of God unto salvation, it instructs the redeemed to "give glory unto the Lord."

The angel concludes with the authoritative command, "Worship Him." Revealed religion restores true worship to the world, directs to the right object, and opens the only way for sinners to the mercy-seat. It is with peculiar propriety the prophesy mentions, that the worship taught by the Gospel is the worship of the Creator, who "made heaven and earth, and the sea and the fountains of waters." It inculcates this great truth, that revealed religion adopts, confirms, and enjoins the religion of nature; that God, who is related to us as Creator, has revealed Himself also in the new and adorable relation of Redeemer; that sinners, therefore, who come to the Saviour, come to Him who made them; in worshiping their Redeemer they worship their Creator. "Thy Maker is Thy husband."

This meets the objections of infidelity, and seems to point to prevailing principles at the time when the event foretold will be accomplished. The everlasting Gospel which the angel proclaims demonstrates the religion of nature, however perfect in itself, to be inadequate for the salvation of those who have sinned. It declares the Creator to be a Redeemer, and in this relation invites sinners to fear God, to give Him glory, and worship Him.

As a motive for preaching the Gospel, and an argument for its reception, the angel announces that "the hour of God's Judgment is come." The term judgment, in the Apocalypse, usually respects the decision of the controversy which has long subsisted between the world and Jesus Christ; but it is evident a particular reference is here made to the judgment to be inflicted upon the nations chargeable with slaying the witnesses. "The nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged;" the time when the dead saints shall be remembered, and the blood of the martyrs, by terrible judgments, be avenged. This is considered as the commencement of that awful decision, the beginning of that series of judgment, which will terminate the controversy between the Redeemer and His adversaries. To this, in the first instance; the angel has respect. He calls with "a loud voice—The hour of His judgment is come." Let the nations tremble; let the world adore; especially let the Churches hear! The beginning of this judgment, the very hour of its commencement, is the signal for the angel's flight, and for extending the Redeemer's kingdom.

3. To whom is the Gospel to be sent? To whom is the angel

commissioned to carry his treasure? "Unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." The term earth, when uttered figuratively in this book, is a symbol for the Roman Empire, including the whole extent of the papal hierarchy. Commentators, who view it here as a symbol, understand the prophecy as only foretelling the promulgation of the Gospel in its purity, throughout the bounds of that empire, as it is now divided into different nations, tongues and people. But the term has a literal meaning, and it occurs here in connection with the alphabetical language; it must, therefore, be understood in its literal sense, indicating the whole globe which we inhabit, with all the nations and people of the world. To these, however, distant and dispersed, diversified in their situation, and differing in their manners and languages; to all these the angel bends his course; to all these he is commissioned to preach the everlasting Gospel.

You have the meaning of the prophecy. What was suggested by the hieroglyphic, is illustrated and confirmed by the alphabetical language.

John saw in vision, that after a lapse of time, a singular movement would commence, not in a solitary corner, but in the very midst of the Churches. That the Gospel, in its purity, would be sent to the most distant lands, and success crown the benevolent work. The ordinary exercise of the ministry, or the feeble attempts which, at different times, might be made to propagate the Gospel, were not the object of this vision. It was something beyond the common standard, which the apostle beheld with admiration and rapture. It was such preaching and such propagation of the Gospel as John never before contemplated. There was a magnitude in the plan, a concurrence of sentiment, a speed in the execution, a zeal in the efforts, and a prosperity in the enterprise, which distinguished this from all former periods.

The event here described comprehends a series of causes and effects, a succession of means and ends, not to be completed in a day, or finished by a single exertion. It is represented as a growing and permanent work. It commences from small beginnings in the midst of the Churches, but it proceeds, and will increase in going. There are no limits to the progress of the angel. From the time he begins to fly and preach, he will continue to fly and preach until he has brought the everlasting Gospel to all nations, and tongues, and kindred and people in the earth. Hail, happy period! Hail, cheering prospect! When will that blessed hour arrive? When will the angel commence his flight? This leads us, *Secondly.* To investigate the time when this prophecy will begin to be accomplished.

The whole structure of the vision, the grandeur of the scene, and the solemn exposition of the symbols, recommended this illustrious prophecy to the peculiar notice of the Churches, and yet it seems to have been generally neglected or misrepresented by commentators. It has either been restricted to what happened at the Reformation, or thrown into the great mass of events which are to take place after the Millennium has fully commenced. Whereas, upon examination, it will be found, both from the order of the vision and its express object that it comprehends something vastly beyond what was realized at the Reformation. And, so far from actually belonging to the millennial period, it is only the appointed means for introducing that state; whatever may be its progress or consummation, it must, in the nature of things, begin its operation some considerable time before the Millennium can commence. [An argument is here introduced to sustain this opinion; and it is further confirmed by notes in an Appendix to the printed discourse.]

With this conclusion, if, now, we compare existing facts; if we view the missionary spirit which has suddenly pervaded the Churches, and estimate the efforts lately made, and still making, for the sending the Gospel to those who know not the precious name of Jesus, and are perishing in their sins; do we not discover a striking resemblance of what the vision describes? May we not exclaim, Behold the angel! His flight is begun!

"The hour of God's judgment," we have already seen, is mentioned as the very hour when the angel begins to fly. This is a part of his proclamation. Upon this his commission to go forth is expressly sanctioned. To the three other great events which are to happen, the extensive preaching of the Gospel must, in the nature of things, be antecedent, as means to effect those ends; but with the first mentioned it is to be coetaneous. When that begins, this will also commence. What we are to understand by this judgment of God has been explained, and we are assured that, sooner or later—but we recoil at the exposition, and proceed with reluctance upon a subject which excites such sympathy, such sensibility, so much pain. Yet faithfulness renders it incumbent to say—we are assured that, sooner or later, it will certainly be inflicted upon the nations, in their national capacity, who are chargeable with the murder of the saints. The justice and dignity of the moral government; the veracity of God in fulfilling what He has so repeatedly declared in His word; a vindication of the insulted honor of the Saviour and

His love to His people and cause, all conspire to render His dispensation inevitable. The debt must be paid. The voice of blood will be heard. Believers who reside in those nations, and dread the scene, might as well pray that the Lord would not be "revealed in flaming fire to take vengeance upon them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ;" or, that the elements might be preserved from melting with fervent heat, and the world exempted from final conflagration, as to pray that the precious blood of the saints should not be avenged.

The righteous may protect the wicked, and in the ordinary procedure of Providence, avert impending destruction for a time; but although Noah, Daniel, and Job were there, when this hour of retribution arrives, they could procure no longer forbearance. Conformably to this, His people are not exhorted to pray against the approaching calamity, but to submit in faith and hope; and when the awful season shall arrive, to fly to their chambers and hide themselves. They shall be safely protected. The Lord knoweth how to deliver His children; and will, as when Jerusalem was destroyed, provide some Pella for them. "When He maketh inquisition for blood, He remembereth them; He forgetteth not the cry of the humble."

But when will God perform this strange work? Ah, perhaps it is already begun! What are the singular, what the desolating scenes which have opened, and are still enlarging in prospect? Why are convulsed nations rising in a new and terrific form to exterminate each other? Are these the beginnings of sorrows? Are these the first movements for avenging the Saviour's cause? Is God now coming out of His place to judge the earth, to judge that portion of the world which assisted the beast in slaying the witnesses? Must the blood, so long covered and forgotten by men, now come in remembrance and be disclosed? Must this generation—we forbear. Judge ye. But be assured, that if this work be begun, or whenever it doth begin, at that very hour the angel will begin to fly. When Zion sings of judgment, she always sings of mercy.

Let this suffice. You have attended to the prophecy, and estimated the period of its accomplishment. You have compared existing facts with the prediction, and drawn a conclusion. Do you now call, "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" The watchman saith, "The morning cometh, and also the night." Clouds and darkness still remain, and the gloom may even thicken at its close; but the rising dawn will soon dispel the shades, and shine "more and more unto the perfect day." "The morning cometh!"

From the numerous reflections suggested by this subject, the limits of our discourse permit us to select only a few.

1. How mysterious are the ways of God! "His way is in the sea, His path in the great waters, and His footsteps are not known." The time which elapsed before the birth of the Messiah; the narrow boundaries within which the Church was circumscribed during the dispensation of the Old Testament; the sufferings which overwhelmed her immediately after the primitive ages of Christianity; and the small progress of truth and righteousness for so many centuries to the present day, are all, to us, mysterious and inexplicable. What difficulties hold us in suspense! How many inquiries arise! If the everlasting Gospel is to be preached to the whole world, why are the nations permitted to remain so long in ignorance and wickedness? If the heathen be given to the Lord Jesus, why doth He delay to take possession of them? Why a discrimination? Why—"But O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus?" Can any "say unto Him, What dost Thou?" Say rather, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight!"

Delays have tried the faith and patience of the saints; and scoffers, seizing the occasion, have dared to demand, "Where is the promise of His coming?" But darkness will be succeeded by light, perplexing difficulties all be solved, and apparent confusion terminate in perfect order. Zion shall before long cease to complain that "her Lord hath forgotten her;" and as for the wicked, they may suppress their blasphemies. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise. Behold, the day cometh," too soon for them, "the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble." God will vindicate His ways, and display the harmony which has forever subsisted between His providence and promises. The period is approaching that will abundantly compensate for the severest trials and the longest delays; a period when the Redeemer's kingdom on earth will perfectly correspond to the sublimest descriptions of its extent and glory. "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice. He will make crooked things straight, and darkness light. As for God, His way is perfect."

2. The magnitude of this event next arrests our attention. Vast in its nature and consequences, it involves renovations in the moral

world more extensive and stupendous than any hitherto experienced; it implicates radical changes in the manners and customs of mankind; and even comprehends revolutions in the principles and administration of civil government, which surpass the power of anticipation. But vast and difficult as these may appear, there is nothing in their rise, their progress, or their consummation that implies a contradiction. In the physical order of things the event is possible; agreeable to the moral system it can be effected; and it certainly is most desirable and devoutly to be wished. When all nations receive the Gospel, and become real Christians; when men of every rank, "from the least to the greatest, shall know the Lord," and devote themselves to the service of their Redeemer, then all will be happy. Individuals will be happy, society will be happy, and peace, joy, and holiness prevail throughout the whole earth. This is the manifestation for which the world is waiting. The creation, groaning under the complicated miseries introduced by sin, will then obtain the deliverance for which it has been so long in travail.

Alarmed at the prospect, infidels raise formidable objections, and, with infernal malignity, ridicule the hope of believers. "All things," say they, "all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation; and all things will forever so remain. Nothing can produce the mighty change you Christians contemplate. You cherish fictions, chimeras, and dreams. You draw Elysian scenes which will never be realized. What! convince the ferocious followers of Mohammed that their prophet was an impostor, their Alcoran a rhapsody! Persuade the Chinese to abandon their ancient habits! Induce the myriads in India to demolish their pagodas, and erect temples to Jesus Christ! Curb the roving Tartars! Elevate the groveling Africans! Or tame the savages of America! How can these things be?" Not by human *might or power,* we reply. We know more than infidels can inform us of the stupendous heights and horrid abysses over which the promise has to pass; but none of these things move us. Were it to be accomplished by man; were the subtle counsels of the wise or the nerved arm of the hero required, the afflicting consequences, in their fullest latitude, would readily be admitted. But it is the work of God. This answers all questions—this silences every cavil. Is any thing too hard for Him "that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers?" Are not all things possible with Him who "doth according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand?" Has the glorified Mediator all power given to Him in heaven and in earth to accomplish this very event, and can the faith of His people be chimerical? Are their hopes to be ridiculed? Great as it may be, it is not too great for Him to perform. "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made strait; and the rough places plain; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

3. The certainty of the accomplishment affords a consoling reflection. This is implied in what has already been said; but it deserves a more distinct consideration. Christians are not chargeable with enthusiasm when they believe the promises of God will be fulfilled. They follow no cunningly devised fable when they "make known the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ." They "speak the words of truth and soberness," when they say, the everlasting Gospel will be successfully preached "to all them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." Always ready to "give a reason of the hope that is in them," in regard to their own salvation, they are equally prepared to vindicate their expectation respecting the enlargement of their Redeemer's kingdom in the world.

The truth of God is pledged to accomplish His word. Nothing can possibly intervene to change His plan. Nothing can arise to frustrate His purpose. The Lord has faithfully executed all He promised, in the proper season, from the beginning of the world; and will He not perfect what yet remaineth? After preserving His Church under the wasting persecutions of imperial Rome, and the execrable fury of Rome papal; after hiding her in the wilderness, and nourishing her so long in her adversity; will He not bring her forth to public view in the beauties of holiness, "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners? As I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all as with an ornament, and bind them on thee as a bride doth: I will contend with them that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children: all flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob."

It is right and proper that Jesus Christ should reign over the whole world, and that all nations should serve Him. Is He not worthy, "the Scepter of whose kingdom is a Scepter of righteousness, to be the King of Kings and Lord of Lords?" Is He constituted the heir of the world, and shall He not in due season possess His inheritance? Hath He shed His precious blood upon this earth, and is it not reasonable and fit that the theater of His deep humiliation should become also the theater of His exalted authority, power and grace? Has the heel of the Saviour been bruised to the utmost extent of the sentence, and will not the head of the serpent be broken in the fullest import of the promise? Are the children of God instructed to plead that His kingdom may come; and will not their heavenly Father answer the incessant prayers, which for many ages have addressed His throne? "Shall not God avenge His own elect which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily." The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him. The kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all the kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Remove the diadem and take off the crown. "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more until He come whose right it is; and I will give it to Him."

Before the Messiah came, His people were wearied with waiting. Many conjectures and errors prevailed among the Jews in their calculations and expectations. But seasons, and years, and ages revolved; and changes and revolutions in the nations and kingdoms of the earth succeeded; until the fullness of time arrived, and then the Saviour was born. So among Christains there may be misapprehensions concerning the nature and extent of the blessings promised to the Church; erroneous conclusions may be formed respecting the time when the happy period we contemplate will commence; but, "in the end, the visions shall speak." Seasons and years, and ages will revolve; and changes and revolutions in the nations and kingdoms of the earth succeed until the day "dawns, and the day-star arises," and then "the dominion and glory, and kingdom, shall be given to Him, that all people, nations and languages shall serve Him." Nothing on the part of sinners prevented His coming in the flesh; and all the ignorance of mankind, the prejudice of unbelief, the malice of infidelity, and the combined powers of earth and hell, will not delay His coming, with His Gospel and Spirit, agreeably to His promise. "God is not a man, that He should lie, neither the son of man, that He should repent: Hath He said, and shall He not do it? Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good? I the Lord will hasten it in His time."

Come, "let us walk about Zion, and go round about her," let us "tell the towers thereof and mark well her bulwarks." The Church, from the beginning, had been greatly circumscribed, and was still a small flock when our Lord was upon earth. It has continued comparatively small for many centuries, and few have even hitherto entered in at the straight gate, contrasted with the multitude who choose the broad way "that leadeth to destruction." But "glorious things are spoken of the city of God." The interests of religion shall not always be thus depressed. The Church of Christ will emerge from obscurity, and the number of His followers not be small. Nothing is more certain than that God has promised a great enlargement of the kingdom of the Redeemer in this world, with abundant communications of His Spirit and presence. In the most unequivocal language it is foretold, that all people and nations throughout the whole earth shall be instructed in the true religion, and brought into the Church of God. "All dominions shall serve and obey Him. All nations shall serve Him. All nations shall call Him blessed. In Him shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. He will destroy the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. All flesh shall see the salvation of the Lord. Unto Him shall all flesh come. The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the seas." In this the promises of the Old as well as of the New Testament completely harmonize. They all establish the desirable fact, that a period will most assuredly arrive, when there shall not be one nation in the world which shall not embrace the Christian religion. "The nation and kingdom which shall not serve Thee shall perish, yea, these nations shall be utterly wasted."

A time will therefore come when the knowledge of the truth shall universally prevail, and holiness shall characterize the world; a time when the Church shall be known and acknowledged to be but one, a dignified and excellent society, connected in the most perfect order, and shining in the light of the Sun of Righteousness; a time when the world shall be delivered from the evils and calamities under which it has so long groaned, and the blessings of God the Redeemer be upon all the families of the earth: "Then the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." Then "let the wilderness and the cities lift up their voices; let the villages, the inhabitants of the rock sing; let them shout from the top of the mountains, let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare His praise in the islands."

These promises have not yet been fulfilled. There has never been any propagation of true religion that corresponds to the universality indicated in the promises. Where the word and ordinances have been hitherto known and enjoyed, their blessed influence upon the hearts and conduct of men has not been thus powerfully experienced. And countless millions throughout the earth, have never heard that there is a Saviour.

To the fulfillment of these promises, it is necessary that the Gospel be sent to every nation in the world. The preached word is the established mean for converting sinners, and without the mean the end will not be obtained. "The preaching of the cross" is unto them which are saved the power of God. It hath pleased Him, by the "foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." If, therefore, the blessings promised, are to be conferred, there will also come a time when God will send His everlasting Gospel to every people, tongue and kindred in the earth. This time, we believe, is arrived. The present exertions in the churches, we are persuaded, are the first stirrings, the gradual beginnings for accomplishing that great end.

Eventful period! A time replete with occurrences of the highest importance to the world! Long lives for many generations have passed in uniform succession, and men have grown old without witnessing any remarkable deviation from the ordinary course of Providence. But now a new era is commencing. The close of the last, and the opening of the present century, exhibit strange and astonishing things. Principles and achievements, revolutions and designs, events uncommon and portentous, in rapid succession, arrest our attention. Each year, each day is pregnant with something great, and all human calculations are set at defiance. The infidel, with his impious philosophy, stands aghast, and destitute of resources, with trembling forebodings, wonders how and where the perplexed scene will end; while the Christian, instructed by the word and Spirit of his Saviour, calmly views the turning of the dreadful wheels, and knows which way they proceed. Strengthened by Divine grace he stands undaunted in the mighty commotion, and looks up rejoicing that his prayers are heard, and that his "redemption draweth nigh."

4. How influential the motive suggested by this prediction to engage in strenuous exertions to propagate the Gospel! How forcible the argument to persevere in the benevolent work! When "Daniel understood by books the number of years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet," his attention was fixed; his affections were raised; and it operated as a motive to intercede for the accomplishment of the prophecy; agreeably to the maxim, that

will be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them. The pious captives anxiously waiting for their restoration, were no doubt instructed by Daniel, and joined with him in supplicating the throne of grace. The word passed rapidly among the scattered families, and they gladly prepared for the impending change. It is supposed that Daniel, who, from his former station at the king's court, might easily obtain access to Cyrus, communicated to that prince, with suitable and successful arguments, the part assigned in prophecy for him to fulfill. In this way the prophet was instrumental in Divine Providence in bringing forward the completion of the promise. He united exertions with his prayers. He felt the influence of the motive; and the grace which was bestowed upon him was not in vain.

In like manner let Christians now be wise, and receive instruction. "Ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night nor of darkness, therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober." It is time for the wise virgins who have slumbered to arise and trim their lamps. The cry is made, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!" He cometh to send His Gospel abroad, and bless the world with His truth and righteousness.

It is an honor to be employed in the service of the Redeemer. "I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." It is a privilege to be laborers together with God. It is a pleasant work, to go up to the mountain and bring wood and build the house, when we are convinced the time is come, and the Lord saith, "He will take pleasure in it, and will be glorified."

Every motive which stimulates to vigorous efforts in propagating the Gospel, derives additional force and energy from this word of prophecy. Is the glory of God an impressive argument? Attend to the prediction before us, and be encouraged to hope, that God, who hath glorified His holy name, will soon glorify it again. He will make Himself known throughout the whole earth, not only in His Divine perfections, as the one only true God, but in the adorable manner of His existence, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and will be worshiped every where in the blessed relation of Redeemer as well as Creator. Doth the love of Christ constrain? Have you crowned Him with your homage; and often grieved at the contempt cast upon His precious name and cause? See what is doing in the churches! To Him every knee will bow; "the most Mighty is girding His sword upon His thigh; the arm of the Lord will awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old; and the people shall fall under Him. His name shall endure forever." Are you affected with the deplorable condition of the greatest part of the world, which lieth in ignorance and wickedness? Behold the everlasting Gospel is going forth to every tongue, and kindred, and nation, and shall universally prevail. Yet a little while, and the people that walk in darkness will see a great light, and upon them that dwell in the land of the shadow of death will the light shine. All the precepts which are our warrant to engage in this work; all the promises which are our encouragement to persevere with firmness, receive new weight and influence. While we are musing upon the prediction before us, our hearts are hot within us; the fire burns; zeal kindles to a flame; we glow with ardor to perform our part, and assist the flight of the preaching angel. We live to see the dawn; we long to see the day. We witness at least the beginnings of what many prophets and righteous men have desired to see, and have not seen them. For those of us who are advanced in years, let this suffice. We now can depart in peace! We shall hear of the accomplishment, and join with those who rejoice in heaven, over sinners who are converted to Christ!

DISCOURSE SEVENTIETH.

WILLIAM WHITE, D.D.

Bishop White was born in Philadelphia, Pa., April 4th, 1748, and educated in his native city. After graduating from his collegiate course and studying theology, he visited England, and received deacon's orders from Dr. Terrick, then bishop of London, and diocesan of all the Episcopal churches in America. On his return he was settled as assistant minister of Christ Church and St. Peter's, of Philadelphia, and in a few years was chosen rector of these churches. During the Revolutionary struggle he was the friend of Washington, and was elected chaplain to Congress, at Yorktown, 1777. He presided at the Convention for the union of the different Episcopal churches in this country, and as bishop elect of Pennsylvania, proceeded to England for bishop's orders, and was consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury; after which he returned and commenced the duties of his Episcopate in 1787. The place of his residence was Philadelphia; where he ceased from his labors on the 17th of July, 1836, expiring without a groan, in his dwelling-house on Walnut-street, where he had resided for more than fifty years.

Bishop White was a man of unquestioned piety, and his whole life was marked by complete and beautiful consistency. He was eminent as the minister of religion in the councils which gave liberty to his country, and the center of affection to a large community. For more than forty years he was the senior bishop of the Episcopal Communion, where he exerted a wide influence, mild and paternal. He was a man of considerable erudition as a scholar, and as a preacher, was esteemed for his judicious and solid instructions. He wrote and spoke with earnestness and impressiveness, and often invested his thoughts with great beauty and eloquence. A collection of his sermons has been published; and the excellent memoir by Dr. Bird Wilson, is a fitting tribute to his worth.

The sermon here given is not found in his printed works. It is kindly furnished by his son, Thomas H. White, Esq., of Philadelphia; and owes its appearance in this form to the suggestions of several distinguished Episcopal clergymen, who, from having heard it delivered, or otherwise, entertained a high estimate of its value, and desired to see it in print. The subject is treated with much discrimination and ability, relieving it from difficulties, and rendering it profitable for instruction.

THE SIN OF DAVID IN THE CASE OF URIAH.

"And the Lord sent Nathan unto David."—2 SAMUEL, xii. 1.

The chapter of which these words are the beginning, has been read as the first lesson of the service of this morning. It has reference to a crime, which, considered in connection with the character stained by it, has been a subject of mockery with the profane, and of difficulty with many of the devout. There being an annual return of it in the series of our lessons for the Sundays, occasion shall be now taken to bring the recorded transaction into view; and the sentiments to be offered will be arranged under these four heads: the sin of David—the reproof of the prophet—the consequent repentance—and the forgiveness.

1st. Of the sin of David. He accidentally beheld a beautiful woman, toward whom he gave a loose to his affections, before he discovered that she was the wife of another. Hearing of this impediment to the gratification of his unlawful passion, he became guilty of an action inconsistent with his profession of religion, and with the clearest dictates of the sense of honor. Perhaps, as power is intoxicating, he conceived of himself as not subjected to the ordinary rules of society. But to bring disgrace on his reign, or danger to his person, was not within his contemplation. To guard against these, he invented a piece of base cunning, in order to deceive a husband, already injured beyond the possibility of reparation. The husband, Uriah, doubtless, either from suspicion, or prompted by some intimation of the wrong done to him, avoided the snare. Now, the king found it necessary to rid himself of a man whom he was not able to impose on. For this purpose he sent an order to his general, to put Uriah "in the hottest of the battle." In this, he probably found a palliative for his conscience; for, what was it, but to give to a brave soldier a post of honor? Accordingly, the narrative tells us, that Joab "appointed him a place, where he knew the valiant men were." No doubt the victim considered himself as honored by the appointment, while it gave occasion to the king to solace himself with the thought, that it was the enemy and not he, who put an end to the life of his subject. But religion and virtue abhor the distinction, as appears in the succeeding part of the story.

In the statement of the sin of David, it has been intended, not so much to dwell on the atrocity of it—for which, however, no censure can be too severe—as to remark from it, how imperceptibly one sin prepares the way for another. At first, that of David was licentious love. Next, he was carried to adultery; with which he may at first have thought it unconnected. This drove him to a secret expedient, unworthy of an ingenuous mind, and very different from other incidents in his life. At last he was precipitated to the highest crime against society—that of murder: of such a murder as is aggravated by the character of the sufferer, by the occasion of his fall, by the deliberation with which it was pursued, and by the obduracy with which the tidings of it were received.

The second particular, is the reproof of the prophet; in which, in connection with the respect due to the station of the offender, there is the intrepidity of the man of God.

In order to extort from David the sentence of his own condemnation, Nathan wrapped up the purpose of his mission in a parable, telling the king "there were two men in the same city, the one rich and the other poor." Here we may remark, that the prophet considered the case of a subject as a sufficient illustration of the duty of a prince, station and power, in his estimation, being no dispensation from the obligations of justice. This is a truth which it would have been unnecessary to mention, were it not that in all times and places, there is a propensity in human nature which, unless either controlled by the potent energy of religion, or kept down by fear, makes so corrupt a use of any advantages of birth or of wealth even in a very moderate measure to be boasted of. In the eyes of the dissolute possessors of them they appear in the light of a legitimate means of oppression and of the gratification of passion. This is the hinge on which there turns a great proportion of the cases of the seduction of the female children of the poor, whose condition, in the estimation of their more elevated betrayers, divests them of the claims alike of justice and of compassion.

To go on with the parable—"The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds, but the poor man had one only ewe-lamb, which grew up with him and his children, and lay with him in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter." The latter part of the sentence is beautifully expressive of the domestic condition of Uriah. Analagous to the rich man, with his exceeding many flocks and herds, there was the king, who had various sources of satisfaction. Besides the extent of his possessions, there was the homage of his attendants, the obedience of all his subjects, the successes of his arms, and the respect of the neighboring nations. But as for Uriah, the felicity of private life was his all. From this he had torn himself to discharge his duty to his prince; and to this he hoped to return after the toils and the hazards of war. But he hoped for it in vain. The rapacious hand of the rich man had seized on the poor man's ewe-lamb, and, in the end, had taken the life of the injured owner. Here the fable falls short of the guilt at which it was aimed. For although the prophet designed to bring the moral home to the bosom of the king, he avoided the making of the narrative too explicit, lest it should fall short of the effect for which it was contrived. But where it deviates from an exact parallel, it is in such circumstances as make the sentence of the offender apply with more force to himself than to the fictitious object of his resentment.

No sooner did the King of Israel hear of the flagrant crime in the parable, than, little imagining it to be intended for himself, he denounced merited punishment of the criminal. For "David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said unto Nathan, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die; and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he hath done this thing, and because he had no pity." Could we forget the design of the parable, we must commend the righteous indignation of the ruler of a people, and we must venerate his just judgment in the vindication of the cause of the oppressed, and for the humbling of the petty tyrant of a neighborhood. But, alas! himself was the offender; and that in a greater degree than in the case against which his sentence was directed. Here comes in the moral of the fable. Here the prophet shows that his address, although courtly, was not that of a person backward to declare the truth without disguise. In short, here the astonished king is overpowed by the unexpected thunder of a personal application. "And Nathan said unto David, Thou art the man." How comprehensive the accusation! as if it had been said—Thou art the man who hast broken down the inclosures of private right, which it should have been the glory of thy character to have defended. Thou art the man who, not content with the abundance which a gracious Providence has showered down on him, hath seized on the little all of his unprotected neighbor. And thou hast filled up the measure of thy guilt in the murder of a virtuous subject, whose loyalty gave thee an opportunity of wounding his honor, and whose valor made it afterward easy to thee to take away his life.

There is something especially interesting in the notice taken by the prophet of the expedient adopted for the insuring of the death of Uriah. It has been already remarked that the king had probably discharged the weight of the guilt from his conscience, on the plea of the hostile sword by which the deed had been accomplished. But his censor plainly declares—"Thou hast slain him by the sword of the children of Ammon;" as if it had been said—Thou mayest speak peace to thyself by reflecting that it was the sword of a public enemy which slew Uriah. But that sword was the instrument of thy lawless lust; and far from being an excuse, it is an aggravation of the crime, that he was surrendered to a hostile army against which he was guarding thy throne and person.

The prophet, after these close appeals to the conscience of the criminal, goes on to particularize the mercies of Providence toward him. He reminds him of his having been raised from a private station to the throne—of the abundance of his riches—of his deliverance from the rage of his jealous predecessor—of his complete sovereignty over Israel and Judah—and of evidence of this sovereignty in the circumstances that even his master's wives were under his protection, and in his power; for it is to this that the prophet alludes, and not to marriage with them, which never happened—the address concluding with the following affectionate addition—"And if this had been too little for thee, I would moreover have done for thee such and such things." Well might David perceive the immensity of his crime, and well might horror take such possession of him that at first he could only find utterance for the exclamation—"I have sinned against the Lord," which is the third particular.

Short indeed is the confession here on record, even as it stands in the history; however, there are the traces of an ingenuous mind. not taking refuge either in denial or in extenuation. But, to supply the omission of history, in the reasonable principle of "comparing spiritual things with spiritual," we must direct our attention to the penitential sorrow of David, as vented in the Book of Psalms. Is it possible that there should have followed such agony of grief, and that it should not have discharged itself during the intercourse with Nathan? The contrary is a reasonable construction, when there are taken into one view the different records from the same source of inspiration, which makes the Book of Psalms interpretative of the narrative in the second Book of Samuel.

It is thus that the royal penitent humbles himself in the former of these books: "I acknowledge my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid;" and in another place, "I am weary of groaning; every night wash I my bed, and water my couch with my tears." How deep must have been the anguish which could dictate penitential language so expressive of abhorrence of the crime! Again, he exclaims, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, after Thy great goodness, according to the multitude of Thy mercies, do away mine offenses;" and, "Make me to hear of joy and gladness, that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice." What a union of fervor with humility! and how expressive of a mind, conscious indeed of the commission of sin, but possessed of a hearty detestation of it. Again, we read, "Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin;" and again, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Surely the mind which could dictate such strains must have retained a high sense of the purity of the divine law. Farther, "Cast me not away from Thy presence, nor take Thy Holy Spirit from me." Here it would seem that the horrors of a guilty conscience had almost driven the sufferer to despair.

These devotional strains of David are recited as doing justice to his character, not as cleansing it from the stain. Here it may be proper to correct a mistake, which has arisen from the misconstruction of his being called in Scripture "a man after God's own heart." It has been considered as holding him up in the light of a person eminently commendable for holy conduct. But no; it is intended, not of his private, but of his public character; and of this principally in relation to his uninterrupted perseverance in the worship of the one true God. It is well known that idolatry was a sin to which the Israelitish nation, in imitation of their neighbors, were excessively addicted. Accordingly, their institutions were especially intended to guard them against it, as may be perceived in every department of the Levitical law. For the same reason, the praises and the censures passed on their several monarchs had principally a regard to this feature of their divinely-instituted policy.

The distinction may be illustrated thus: It sometimes happens in a human government that, in the administration of its powers, there is expected to be kept in view some prominent object, connected perhaps with local interests, or perhaps with a certain cast of national character, associated in idea with former events, and with reverence of the wisdom of former times. In estimating the merits of the chief ruler of such a country, we should contemplate him with some reference to the peculiarities of his station, not to the excusing of him from the law of moral right, suited to all persons, and places, and times; but to the making of favorable allowances on the score of his sacred regard to the principles of the constitution. In the theocracy administered by David, the highest duty lying on him was the sustaining of the prerogative of the Great King under whose delegated authority he reigned. In either of the cases stated, our commendations of the ruler in his public acts are not to be tested exclusively by the rule of moral right, and without regard to the claims of official character. It was on a different ground that he stood accountable at the bar of God.

As to the personal character of David, some of his actions show him possessed of the most generous affections, almost beyond example. There are others which, although very blamable, ought not to be judged of according to the more civilized standard and the more humane maxims of later times. Even the inspiration of prophecy ought not to be admitted in proof of a character presented as a model. Prophets are spoken of as to be "cut off for their iniquity;" and the case of Balaam dying in his sin is on record to the same effect. Much easier, then, may we conceive of a very defective character consistent with general rectitude and favored with the gift in question.

To speak impartially of David, his character is of a mixed kind; and especially the actions which have been considered are in opposition to every sentiment of integrity. Yet, in what has been said, it appears that, however great his sin, his repentance was most exemplary; and therefore his case can never be an encouragement to the obdurate offender, nor warrant his expectation of a similar forgiveness. This leads to the fourth particular.

"The Lord," says Nathan, "hath put away thy sin." It has been already remarked, on the ground of the penitential Psalms to which the transaction gave occasion, that an intervening expression of deep repentance is to be presumed. Further, it ought not to be overlooked that the pardon is announced in the name of an omniscient Being, who discerns the first pangs of a spirit truly penitent. But there may seem to remain a difficulty on the face of the passage. The difficulty is this: When Nathan was reproaching David with his sin, he denounced against him the threat, "Now, therefore, the sword shall never depart from thy house;" and although there was afterward pronounced forgiveness, with the exception of the penalty of the loss of an infant child, yet, even during the life of David, the threat began to be executed after so signal a manner, in the incest of one of his sons, in the rebellion of another, and in the untimely end of both, that it is impossible to overlook the correspondence between the prediction and the events.

To solve the difficulty, it should be remembered that all those crimes which are outrages on social order, naturally lead to such consequences as punish the offenders in the persons of their families. If Scripture had contained no such declaration as that of God's visiting of the sins of parents on their children; yet, as it is applicable to temporal calamity, and to a corrupt influence on morals—for of those points only, it could have been intended—the sense of the declaration is apparent in the course of Divine Providence, and can not have escaped the notice of the most superficial observer. The personal forgiveness indulged to the King of Israel, in consideration of his penitence, did not break the connection between causes and their effects; did not prevent the adultery of the father from reconciling his son Ammon to lewdness in another line; nor the murder of an innocent subject, from being such an example of violence to his son Absalom, as may have caused him to aspire to dethrone his father. This connection is stamped on the unchanging laws of God in nature: and it becomes every man, instead of arraigning the appointment, to bring support to his domestic happiness by the instrumentality of a good example. To put out of view such crimes as are immediately invasions in the peace of society, it may be acted on indirectly by hereditary depravity, in a variety of ways. Every man whose conduct or whose conversation has a tendency to release the consciences of his children from the sense of responsibility to a righteous Judge, or even has not a tendency to sustain that authority, and to induce subjection to it, knows not to what extent there is laid a train of causes, which shall eventuate in the temporal and the eternal ruin of those within his sphere of influence.

Still, there is before us the pardon of a stupendous crime, which may be a ground of hope, not for sin in prospect, not for that which has not been succeeded by the pangs of penitence, leading to a change of heart and a reformation of life, but to a spirit humbled under the sense of transgression, and to a conscience which might otherwise be driven to despair.

From the review of the transaction, let us learn the importance of the admonition—"be not high-minded, but fear;" and "let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." If such a person as David, whose writings contain the most just and elevated sentiments concerning the attributes of God and human duty and devotional compositions admirably descriptive of the breathings of holy desire, could be so far put off his guard by a life of ease and affluence, as to be gradually drawn into crimes of the deepest dye; what a reason is it for humility, for vigilance, and for a constant imploring of the Divine aid!

As his fall should be a warning to the secure, so his repentance should be an example to the sinner, than which there could have been more teeming with anguish and self-reproach. But if any should make it an encouragement of presumption, they manifest such a contrariety to his character, in respect to a sense of moral worth and the indispensable requisitions of religion, as makes it too probable that they will never be like him in his seeking and his obtaining of forgiveness.

Rather, therefore, let it be a motive with all, for the keeping of their passions in subjection. Yes, O man, let it be a lesson to thee, against the indulgence of licentious desires. Let it also lead thee to reflect on the miseries which this destroyer is daily heaping on the human kind. When thou seest him offering up his victims to vice and infamy; when thou tracest his achievements in the births of infants, the heirs of want and wickedness; when thou beholdest the untimely graves, which have opened for the reception of his votaries; when thou observest him invading every thing sacred in private life, and blasting all the friendships which arise from its relations; and *lastly*, when thou followest him through scenes of contention, of malice, and of bloodshed, the effects of his mischievous frenzy, ask thyself whether it be possible he should bestow any satisfaction, which shall repay thee for the consciousness of having contributed to this mass of misery. Let the sentiment be impressed by the anticipation of feelings, which may possess thee in thy dying hour, when thou shalt look back on thy actions, as following thee to judgment. Let the effect of such reflections be the guarding of thine heart, by the wholesome instructions of God's word. And put up thy daily prayers for the assistances of His grace, which is competent to the raising of thee above the power of thy corruptions. That grace, if duly cultivated, will carry thee on to the end of life, not only without the consciousness of flagrant crime, but with such purity and self-command as is the source of pleasures infinitely superior to those of sensuality and excess.

In regard to the past, there is a circumstance in the case of David, which should be held out in warning to those who carry in their consciences the guilt of unrepented sin. That royal offender had dishonored a subject, and then compassed his death: and yet, for any thing that appears, considerable time had passed without self-condemnation, between the dates of those atrocities and the Divine message by the prophet. Many are the sins continually practiced, which, although not meeting like his the public eye, are like it in the circumstance of their being destructive of the peace of others, and ruinous to their prospects. If there should be any one within hearing, conscious of having been guilty of an action of this description, whether it be in a degree like that of David; or in any other way the cause of unmerited injury and suffering; to such a person the moral of Nathan's parable speaks. Or rather, the ministers of the Gospel may consider themselves as speaking to him, under a commission as authoritative as that of Nathan, and saying, Thou art the man who hast abused the advantages, whatever they were, which had been bestowed on thee by nature or by Providence. Be assured, that for this, "God will bring thee into judgment." Repent, therefore, while the day of grace remains. Under the operation of the Holy Spirit, "let there be made a clean heart, and renewed a right spirit within thee:" and by exemplary conduct in future, do what is in thy power to make amends to the community of mankind, for the portion of sorrow which they have received from thee.

In regard to all of us, and in regard to every deviation from the holy Spirit of the Divine law, let the subject excite that sensibility of conscience, which will render us accessible to the ordinary reproofs and threatenings of the Divine word. They are all such as may be usefully brought home to the heart of the individual hearer. Let them, therefore, not to mention the commisson of sin, but in regard to all neglect of duty, be considered as personally addressing us with the admonition that we are so far falling short of a preparation for "the inheritance of the saints in light;" and further as inviting us to "redeem the time," since "the night of death approaches, in which no man can work."

Brethren, it will not be irrelative to the subject to remark, that in the address of Nathan, with its effect on the conscience of David, we have an anticipation of the energy with which the preached Gospel has been since clothed by its great Ordainer. Many and often have been the occasions on which there has been manifested the property of the word of God, significantly described as "a two edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit." Sometimes it has been like the arrow of "a bow drawn at a venture but piercing through the joints and the harness." Sometimes the hearer has been at a loss to conjecture in what way the thoughts of his heart became so exactly known, as to draw down animadversion from the pulpit, when his case and perhaps his person, were unknown to the preacher, and when the true cause was the adaptation of the word of God, to the workings of human nature. Sometimes there have been excited sensibilities, not seldom ending either in extravagance, or in "the goodness which passes away like the morning cloud;" while in other cases they have had salutary and lasting effects in silence and retirement. Sometimes the sinner, thus brought to a sense of the error of his ways, has immediately entered on the work of reformation; while sometimes, without any visible effect at the present, the seed, lodged in a favoring soil, has felt the fostering influence of succeeding events of life, propitious to its vegetation and to its growth. In all this there has been verified the promise of the Saviour, of being "with His Church to the end of the world." While it admonishes every minister of the Gospel, of the weight of his responsibility; it is equally interesting to his hearers; intimating to them the importance of keeping their hearts open to a property of the Divine word, by which they may be either reformed or edified, as their several cases may require. It should especially be borne in mind, that when any truth of Scripture is winged with effect to the conscience or to the affections, it is by the energy of the Holy Spirit of God, without which, even "Paul may plant, and Apollos water" in vain; and that, while on the one hand, the said blessed Agent may be "resisted," may be "grieved," may be "quenched;" on the other hand, where there is a yielding to his governance, it will be fruitful of the "peacepassing understanding," and will "keep" the possessor of it, "through faith unto salvation."

DISCOURSE SEVENTY-FIRST.

JOHN LELAND.

This celebrated preacher was born in Grafton, Massachusetts, May 14, 1754; and in 1774 united with the Baptist Church in Bellingham, from which body he received license to preach at the age of twenty years. He was ordained in 1776. His first ministerial labors were in Virginia, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina, where he had a circuit of one hundred and twenty miles in length. For some time, revivals almost constantly followed his labors. In about two years he had baptized four hundred individuals. In the fourteen years of his preaching, in that part of the country, he baptized seven hundred. In 1790 he removed to New England. After preaching awhile in Connecticut and in Conway, Massachusetts, he settled at Cheshire, in the latter State, where he resided for nearly half a century, though making frequent preaching tours through Vermont, Virginia, New York, and many other States. He died in January 1841, in his eighty-seventh year.

The life of Leland was one of astonishing activity and distinguished usefulness. During his ministry of sixty-eight years he traveled seventy-five thousand miles, preached eight thousand sermons, and baptized one thousand five hundred converts to Christ. Wherever he went he produced a sensation. He was listened to by politicians, and by the religious, by the learned and the unlearned, by the refined and the vulgar, by the young and the old, and always with intense interest, sometimes causing them to weep by his pathos and power, and sometimes producing the contrary effect by his marked eccentricities. Sternly independent, a true patriot and defender of civil and religious rights, possessed of rare natural endowments, shrewd, clear-headed, absolutely fearless in the discharge of duty, whether in the pulpit, council, or legislative chamber, he was sure to excite attention and leave the impress of his strong will. Besides his numerous contributions to periodicals, political, moral, and religious, he published over thirty pamphlets, sermons and poems.

Leland belonged to a class of ministers now rapidly passing away—self-made, deep-thinking, strong-minded, gospel-loving, hard-working, and often eminently useful men, who toiled for their Master, and looked for their reward in heaven. We introduce the following sermon not only as a specimen from this class of preachers, but as exhibiting the marks of decided genius, and powers of graphic description. It is very lengthy, and its chief excellence lies in the first part—the portion of it which is selected—and which is a sublime prose-poem. It was first preached at Grafton, Massachusetts. A few unimportant alterations are made, to suit the abridged form in which it is here given.

THE JARRINGS OF HEAVEN RECONCILED BY THE BLOOD OF THE CROSS.

"And by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven."—COLOSSIANS, i. 20.

The reconciliation of "things in heaven," is the part of the text which I shall attend to.

Let reverence and humility possess my heart, while I develop the character of the Deity—and let all who hear me, at awful distance, bow.

All the changes that have taken place from the beginning until now, and all that will take place hereafter, give to the Almighty no new ideas, furnish Him with no novel matter for consideration. Things which are past, present, or to come, with men, are all in the eternal *now* of the great JEHOVAH; and yet He speaks of Himself as if thoughts and designs entered His mind in a train of succession.

The Divine Being is not composed of parts, or possessed of passions like men; He nevertheless, in condescension to our weakness, speaks of Himself as having head, eyes, ears, face, mouth, etc.; also as being jealous, angry, pacified, reconciled, having His anger turned away, and the like.

Our text implies a contention in heaven; and that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ undertook to reconcile the contending parties to Himself, by Jesus Christ; and that Jesus obtained a peace among all the jarring interests in heaven, by the blood of the cross.

The particulars to be attended to, are,

I. To explain the cause of this contention; and,

II. To nominate the parties at variance, together with their respective pleas.

First. I am to explain the cause of this contention. The rebellion of man against His God, is that which gave rise to this contention. When this contention began in heaven (to speak after the manner of men) the great I AM arraigned the criminal, man, and summoned all the contending parties to appear and make their pleas, before the great white throne of divine glory. Which leads me,

Secondly. To treat of the contending parties and their pleas. The *Holy Law* began: "My rise is not from revelation, although that does me honor; throughout the second volume I hold conspicuous rank and have been magnified and obeyed by the Son of God. But my origin is from the great scale of being itself; so that if there had been no revelation among men, honor and regard would have been my due. Yet with all the sacred majesty due to my character, man, the dependent creature, has risen in rebellion and disregarded my voice; not only in one instance, but sin, taking advantage by me, has wrought in him all manner of concupiscence—so that the imagination of his heart is only evil continually. Now we know a law is nothing without a penalty to enforce it; and a penalty threatened is but a piece of mockery unless it is executed. In this case, therefore, should man escape with impunity, the Divine government would be reduced to contempt, and every fugitive vagrant would be hardened in his wickedness. My demand, therefore, is, that man should die without mercy."

Truth next approached the throne, and after attending to and confirming all which the holy law had said, added, "The soul that sins shall die—cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the law—he that offends in one point is guilty of the whole—the wicked shall be turned into hell—in the day thou rebellest thou shalt surely die. These are the true sayings of God, sentences which came from the mouth of that Being who can not lie; the veracity of the Almighty is therefore pledged that the sinner, man, be speedily executed, without delay—for, if sentence against an evil work be not speedily executed, the hearts of the vicious will be fully set on mischief, and nothing but anarchy and confusion will be seen in the empire."

Justice then advanced, with piercing eyes like flaming streams, and burning tongue like the devouring fire, and made his plea, as follows: "My name may sound inharmonious to the guilty, but that which is just must be right, and the least deviation therefrom must be wrong! I plead for nothing but what is just. I come not with an *ex post facto* law, to inflict a penalty which was not known at the time the sin was committed, but I come to demand the life and blood of the rebel man, who sinned with eyes opened—for guilt will always stain the throne of glory till vengeance is taken on the traitor."

Holiness then addressed the sovereign Arbiter of life and death in the words following: "My name and nature forbid the continuance of the sinner, man, in the empire. He is full of wounds and bruises, and putrifying sores; from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot there is no soundness in him; among all his helpers there is no healing medicine, and if there was, yet he is so stubborn that he would not apply it. Therefore, as two can neither walk nor live together except they be agreed, either the polluted sinner or consummate holiness must quit the regions."

By this time darkness and smoke filled the temple, and seven thunders uttered their voices. The flashes of vindictive fire broke out impatient from the throne, and the angelic messenger waved his dread weapon, which high brandished shone, thirsting for human blood, while hell grew proud in hopes of prey, and laughed profanely loud. The sun became black as sack-cloth, and the heavens were all in angry convulsion. The earth shook to its center, and the everlasting hills trembled. Angels stood astonished at the awful emblems of Divine displeasure, expecting each moment to see the rebel hurled to eternal darkness, as they had seen their fallen brethren, who left their first estate in a former period.

Omnipotence appeared as the executioner of the criminal, clothed in panoply divine—robed in awful majesty. Thunders rolled before him, the shafts of lightning darted through the ethereal vault; the trumpet sounded, the mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs; even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of the Lord. At the brightness that was before Him His thicks clouds passed hailstones and coals of fire. In one hand He had an iron rod with which He could dash His enemies to pieces like a potter's vessel, and in the other a sharp sword, with two edges. He set one foot on the sea, and the other on the earth, and lifted His hand to heaven. His face was awfully majestic, and His voice as the roaring of a lion; but none could learn from His appearance whether He chose to strike the vengeful blow, or interest Himself in behalf of the criminal. At length He spoke: "I am able to destroy as I was mighty to create; nothing is too hard for Me to do. All worlds were spoken into existence by My word, and all material worlds hang upon nothing, through My power; yet I have no will, no choice of My own. Let all the contending parties agree, and I am at their command, all acquiescent. The charges against the criminal, as they now stand, call for My vindictive stroke, but if any expedient shall be found to overrule the pleas which have been made, when the final result is made, then I shall act. Vicious beings feel power and forget right, but

Omnipotence is governed by *right.* The works which I perform are those which all the perfections of Deity, in concert, point out."

Wisdom then arose, and spake to the following effect: "Why is the decree so hasty from the King? The matter is of the first importance. One soul is worth more than all the world. The pending decision not only affects this one criminal, but the millions and millions of human kind. I, Wisdom, dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions—I therefore object to the execution of the criminal, not to controvert the pleas of Law, Truth, and Justice, but to wait until it shall be known whether man has any friend at court who is wise, powerful, and good enough to relieve him, in a way with which Law, Truth, and Justice will be satisfied."

Love then came forward, in all his winning forms; his bosom swelled with philanthropy, and his eye bespoke the benevolence of his heart. In mellifluent accents he began, "My name is Love. No one in heaven claims higher rank than myself, for *God is Love*, of course none deserves to be heard and regarded more than I do. My love to man is everlasting, and neither death nor life, angels, principalities, nor powers, things present, things to come, nor any other creature shall ever extinguish my love.

"'Mine is an unchanging love,
Higher than the heights above:
Deeper than the depths beneath,
Free and faithful, strong as death.'

Should the rebel, therefore, be doomed to perdition, with all his vast progeny, the cross of my love would cause eternal mourning in heaven; to prevent which my fervent cry is, Let the rebel live."

Grace also appeared on the side of the criminal, and made the following plea: "If a creature receives from a fellow-creature, or from his God, a compensation for any services rendered unto him, it is reward and not grace; but if he receives a favor, for which he has no claim on the donor, it is grace. If, moreover, a donor confers a favor, not only on a needy creature, who has no claim on the donor, nor any thing to buy with; but on one, who in addition to his need, has contracted guilt, and is an enemy to the donor, this is grace of a marvelous kind. This is my name, and this is my memorial, and shall be through all ages. To do good for evil is godlike. My plea, therefore, is, that all the transgressions of the criminal may be blotted out—cast behind the back of his God—sunk in the midst of the sea, and he himself raised to a station far more exalted than he possessed before he sinned. If this should not be the case, *grace* would be a word without meaning, and the benevolence of Jehovah would be obscured forever.

Mercy, in concert with Love and Grace, was all divine oratory in favor of the rebel, and proceeded: "I can not claim the same rank among the attributes of Deity, that Wisdom, Power, Holiness, Goodness, Truth and Justice can, since I am myself the child of Love. * * * * * * * *
But when innocent creatures fall into need and misery, the display of Love assumes my name, Mercy. As I therefore have a name in heaven, as Mercy is magnified above the heavens; as Jehovah is rich in mercy, and is the Lord God gracious and merciful, I plead for the life of the criminal at the bar."

Here the pleas ended for a season, and profound silence filled the temple of God.

After a solemn pause, the great I AM, the sovereign judge, thus spake: "The statements and demands of Law, Truth and Justice against the criminal, are well supported. Love, Grace and Mercy have discovered abundance of goodness and good-will toward the sinner; but they have not shown how the law can be honored, Truth supported, and Justice satisfied, in the forgiveness of the rebel; and unless such an expedient can be produced, man must die without mercy. If any of the celestial angels, or any being in the universe can suggest the expedient, the sinner lives—if not, he dies."

He spake—He closed—but all was whist, and silence reigned in heaven.

The elect angels knew how Love, through a Mediator, could confirm innocent creatures in their innocency, but had no idea how criminals could be pardoned.

At the instance of Justice, Omnipotence arose like a lion from the swellings of Jordan; made bare His thundering arm, high raised His brandished sword, waved His iron rod, and advanced toward the rebel with hasty strides.

Love cried, Forbear, I can not endure the sight!

The *Law* replied, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the law to do them. The soul that sins, shall die!

Grace exclaimed, Where sin hath abounded, grace shall much more abound!

Truth said, In the day that thou transgressest thou shalt surely die!

Mercy proclaimed, Mercy rejoiceth against judgment!

Justice, with piercing eye, and flaming tongue, said, "Strike!

strike! strike the rebel dead! and remove the reproach from the throne of heaven!"

At this the angels drooped their wings, and all the harps of heaven played mournful odes. The flaming sword, to pierce the criminal, came near his breast, and the iron rod, to dash him to pieces like a potter's vessel, was falling on his head; when lo! on a sudden, the voice of Wisdom sounded louder than seven thunders, and made the high arches of heaven to ring and reverberate—"DELIVER HIM FROM GOING DOWN TO THE PIT, FOR I HAVE FOUND A RANSOM!"

In that all-eventful crisis, the eternal SON OF GOD, in a *mediatorial form*, appeared, clothed with a garment down to the feet, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. Angels paid Him profound reverence, and the great I AM placed Him at His right hand.

He saw the ruined, guilty man, and oh! amazing grace! He loved. With pity all His inmost bowels moved. He said, "I was set up from everlasting, my goings have been of old, and my delights are with the sons of men. The sinner shall live."

The *Law*, in awful majesty, replied: "I am holy, just, and good, my injunctions on the rebel were perfectly proper for a human being, and my penalty, which the rebel has incurred, is every way proportionate to his crime."

Mediator.—"All you say is true. I am not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not a jot or tittle of the law shall fail."

Truth.—"The lips that never spoke amiss, have said, that the wicked shall be turned into hell. My veracity is therefore pledged to see it executed."

Mediator.—"That part of truth which was proper to reveal unto man, as a moral agent, has said as you relate, with abundance more to the same effect; but that part of truth which the great Jehovah, my heavenly Father, spake unto me, in the covenant of peace, which is made between us both, has declared, that, on account of an atonement which I shall make, sin shall be pardoned, and sinners saved."

Holiness.—"I am so pure that I can never admit a sinner into heaven. Nothing unclean or that worketh a lie shall ever enter there."

Mediator.—"Provision is made in the new covenant, whereof I am the Mediator and Messenger, to remove the pollution as well as the guilt of sin. I have guarantied that sinners shall be washed in my blood and made clean, and come before the throne of glory without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing."

Justice cried out again, "Strike!"

Mediator.—"Not the sinner, but the *Surety!*"

Justice.—"Can heaven admit of a vicarious suffering?"

Mediator.—"It is that of which no government on earth ever will admit, or ever ought to do, but is the singular article agreed upon in the scheme of salvation, which will astonish the universe in its accomplishment. In the fullness of time I shall be born of a woman; be made under the law, and perfectly obey and magnify it, which is all that the law in reason can require of human nature. I shall suffer that penalty for sinners which justice will approve, and God shall accept; shall die, and follow death to its last recess; shall rise again with the same flesh and bones, and thereby obtain the victory over death. I shall continue awhile in the world after I rise, to give incontestible proofs of the resurrection; and then reascend the throne of glory.

* * * *

"The day of days will commence; the great day of dread, for which all other days were made, will arrive; on that day the dead shall be raised, and those who are living on earth shall be changed from a mortal to an immortal state, and all of them shall come to judgment before My bar. Those who are like goats among sheep, like tares among wheat, who are unclean and polluted, who are lovers of transgression and haters of obedience, who have broken the law—wantoned with atoning blood, and done despite against the work of the Holy Ghost; shall be banished the kingdom—cast into outer darkness, and gnaw their galling bonds forever. But the righteous (both those whose souls have been in Paradise, and their bodies sleeping in the dust, and those also who never shall have died) shall be admitted into the kingdom prepared for them—shall enter into life eternal.

"Now, if any one in heaven has aught against this plan, let him speak; for I have undertaken to reconcile all things and beings in heaven to the salvation of man."

He closed! but O what rapturous joy beamed forth on every face in heaven! Law, Truth, and Justice cried out, "It is all we want or wish for." Love, Grace, and Mercy shouted, "It is the joy of our hearts—the delight of our eyes, and the pleasure of our souls." The great I AM said, "It is finished—the expedient is found—the sinner shall live—deliver him from going down to the pit, for a ransom is found!" The angels, filled with heavenly pity and divine concern, who had been waiting in anxious suspense, through the important contest, now swept their golden harps, and sang aloud, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and good-will to man! Thou art worthy, O, Thou Son of God, to receive glory, and honor, and riches, and power, forever and ever! Man, though a little lower in nature than ourselves, shall be raised even higher, being in likeness of nature more like the Son of God. While we shall be ever adoring confirming love through a Mediator, men will be extolling the riches of redeeming blood and the freeness of boundless grace."

The great I AM then said to the Mediator, "Forasmuch as Thou hast undertaken to reconcile all things in heaven and in earth to me, and hast proposed a plan of reconciliation in which all contending parties are agreed, in which mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other, justice and judgment surround My throne, and mercy and truth go before My face—and whereas I know that Thou will, at the time appointed, fulfill all Thy engagements, at the expense of Thy blood;—therefore, behold I give Thee a name which is above any name—that at the name of JESUS every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess. Thou shalt have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. I will divide Thee a portion with the great, and Thou shalt divide the spoils with the strong. I will give the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession, and I will glorify Thee with Myself, with the glory which Thou hadst before the world began."

DISCOURSE SEVENTY-SECOND.

JONATHAN MAXCY, D.D.

President Maxcy was born at Attleborough, Massachusetts, September 2, 1768, and graduated at Brown University in 1787, with the highest honors of his class. He was then appointed tutor in the college; which office he filled with much success for four years. About this time he united with the first Baptist Church in Providence. In 1790 he received license to preach from this church, and the year following resigned his tutorship and assumed its pastoral charge, being ordained September 8, 1791. On the day of his ordination he was elected a Trustee of the college, and also appointed Professor of Divinity. The next year, after the death of President Manning, in 1791, he was elected to the Presidency of the college, to meet which appointment he resigned the charge of the church. He was now only twenty-four years of age; but the brilliancy of his talents had already given him a wide reputation. In 1802 he was elected President of Union College, where he officiated two years; when, desiring a climate more congenial to his failing health, he accepted the appointment of President of the South Carolina College, which station he filled for the next sixteen years; or until the time of his death, June 4th, 1820.

Dr. Maxcy sustained the reputation of a sound scholar in the various branches of learning, both elegant and profound. He cultivated with special enthusiasm an acquaintance with classical literature, belles-lettres, and the fine arts. As a teacher he was unsurpassed in popularity. But the admirable proportion and harmony of his powers never appeared to better advantage than in the pulpit. His conceptions were bold and striking, and his style pure, elegant, and often sublime. The American pulpit has had few preachers of more enchanting eloquence. "The eloquence of Maxcy," says one, "was mental; you seemed to hear the soul of the man; and each one of the largest assembly, in the most extended place of worship, received the slightest impulse of his silver voice as if he stood at his very ear. In the most thronged audiences you heard nothing but the preacher and the pulsations of your own heart; and his utterance was not more perfect than his whole discourse was instructive and enchanting."

The literary remains of President Maxcy consist of fifteen sermons, five addresses, and three orations, published with a Memoir in one volume, octavo. One of his most celebrated productions is the short discourse here given. It was delivered at Providence, in 1795, and produced a striking effect. The train of thought is luminous and philosophical, and is marked by sublime sentiments and beautiful imagery, embodied in classical and forcible language.

A PRACTICAL BELIEF IN THE DIVINE EXISTENCE.

"For the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead."—ROMANS, i. 20.

Nothing will more effectually guard us against vice than a firm belief of the existence of God. For surely if we realize that there is such a Being, we shall naturally infer from His perfections, from the nature of His moral government, and from our situation as rational creatures, that we are amenable at His awful tribunal. Superior power, wisdom, and goodness always lay us under restraint and command our veneration. These, even in a mortal, overawe us. They restrain, not only the actions, but the words and thoughts of the most vicious and abandoned. Our happiness depends on our virtue. Our virtue depends on the conformity of our heart and conduct to the laws prescribed us by our beneficent Creator.

Of what vast importance, then, is it to our present as well as future felicity to possess in our hearts a feeling sense, and in our understandings a clear conviction, of the existence of that Being whose power and goodness are unbounded, whose presence fills immensity, and whose wisdom, like a torrent of lightning, emanates through all the dark recesses of eternal duration! How great must be the effect of a sense of the presence of the great Creator and Governor of all things, to whom belong the attributes, eternity, independency, perfect holiness, inflexible justice, and inviolable veracity; complete happiness and glorious majesty; supreme right, and unbounded dominion! A sense of accountability to God will retard the eager pursuit of vice; it will humble the heart of the proud; it will bridle the tongue of the profane, and snatch the knife from the hand of the assassin.

A belief of the existence of God is the true original source of all virtue, and the only foundation of all religion, natural or revealed.

Set aside this great luminous truth, erase the conviction of it from the heart: you then place virtue and vice on the same level; you drive afflicted innocence into despair; you add new effrontery to the marred visage of guilt; you plant thorns in the path and shed an impenetrable gloom over the prospects of the righteous. Sin has alienated the affections and diverted the attention of men from the great Jehovah. "Darkness has covered the earth, and gross darkness the people." Men have worshiped the works of their own hands, and neglected the true God, though His existence and perfections were stamped in glaring characters on all creation. From the regularity, order, beauty, and conservation of this great system of things, of which man makes a part; from the uniform tendency of all its divisions to their proper ends, the existence of God shines as clearly as the sun in the heavens. "From the things that are made," says the text, "are seen his eternal power and Godhead."

I. Man himself is a proof of God's existence. Let us place Him before us in His full stature. We are at once impressed with the beautiful organization of His body, with the orderly and harmonious arrangement of His members. Such is the disposition of these, that their motion is the most easy, graceful, and useful than can be conceived. We are astonished to see the same simple matter diversified into so many different substances, of different qualities, size, and figure. If we pursue our researches through the internal economy, we shall find that all the different parts correspond to each other with the utmost exactness and order; that they all answer the most beneficent purposes. This wonderful machine, the human body is animated, cherished, and preserved, by a spirit within, which pervades every particle, feels in every organ, warns us of injury, and administers to our pleasures. Erect in stature, man differs from all other animals. Though his foot is confined to the earth, yet his eye measures the whole circuit of heaven, and in an instant takes in thousands of worlds. His countenance is turned upward, to teach us that He is not like the other animals, limited to the earth, but looks forward to brighter scenes of existence in the skies.

Whence came this erect, orderly, beautiful constitution of the human body? Did it spring up from the earth self-formed? Surely not. Earth itself is inactive matter. That which has no motion can never produce any. Man surely could not, as has been vainly and idly supposed, have been formed by the fortuitous concurrence of atoms. We behold the most exact order in the constitution of the human body. Order always involves design. Design always involves intelligence. That intelligence which directed the orderly formation of the human body, must have resided in a Being whose power was adequate to the production of such an effect. Creation surely is the prerogative of a self-existent, uncaused Being. Finite creatures may arrange and dispose, but they can not create; they can not give life. It is a universal law through all nature that like produces like. The same laws most probably obtain through the whole system with which we are connected. We have, therefore, no reason to suppose that angels created man.

Neither can we, without the greatest absurdity, admit that he was formed by himself, or by mere accident. If in the latter way, why do we never see men formed so in the present day? Why do we never see the clods of earth brightening into human flesh, and the dust under our feet crawling into animated forms, and starting up into life and intelligence? If we even admit that either of the forementioned causes might have produced man, yet neither of them could have preserved him in existence one moment. There must, therefore, be a God uncaused, independent and complete. The nobler part of man clearly evinces this great truth. When we consider the boundless desires and the inconceivable activity of the soul of man, we can refer his origin to nothing but God. How astonishing are the reasoning faculties of man! How surprising the power of comparing, arranging, and connecting his ideas! How wonderful is the power of imagination! On its wings, in a moment, we can transport ourselves to the most distant part of the universe. We can fly back, and live the lives of all antiquity, or surmount the limits of time and sail along the vast range of eternity. Whence these astonishing powers, if not from a God of infinite wisdom, goodness, and power?

2. "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world," says the text, "are clearly seen." Let us for a moment behold our earth. With what a delightful scene are we here presented! The diversification of its surface into land and water, islands and lakes, springs and rivers, hills and valleys, mountains and plains, renders it to man doubly enchanting. We are entertained with an agreeable variety, without being disgusted by a tedious uniformity.

Every thing appears admirably formed for our profit and delight. There the valleys are clothed in smiling green, and the plains are bending with corn. Here is the gentle hill to delight the eye, and beyond, slow rising from the earth, swells the huge mountain, and with all its loads of waters, rocks, and woods, heaves itself up into the skies. Why this pleasing, vast deformity of nature? Undoubtedly for the benefit of man. From the mountains descend streams to fertilize the plains below, and cover them with wealth and beauty. The earth not only produces every thing necessary to support our bodies, but to remedy our diseases, and gratify our senses. Who covered the earth with such a pleasing variety of fruits and flowers? Who gave them their delightful fragrance, and painted them with such exquisite colors? Who causes the same water to whiten in the lily, that blushes in the rose? Do not these things indicate a Cause infinitely superior to any finite being? Do they not directly lead us to believe the existence of God, to admire His goodness, to revere His power, to adore His wisdom, in so happily accommodating our external circumstances to our situation and internal constitution?

3. But how are we astonished to behold the vast ocean, rolling its immense burden of waters! Who gave it such a configuration of particles as to render it movable by the least pressure, and at the same so strong as to support the heavier weights? Who spread out this vast highway of all nations under heaven? Who gave it its regular motion? Who confined it within its bounds? A little more motion would disorder the whole world! A small incitement on the tide would drown whole kingdoms. Who restrains the proud waves when the tempest lifts them to the clouds? Who measured the great waters, and subjected them to invariable laws? That great Being, "who placed the sand for the bound thereof by a perpetual decree that it can not pass; and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over." With reason may we believe that from the things that are made, are clearly seen eternal power and wisdom.

4. Passing by the numerous productions and appendages of the earth, let us rise from it, and consider the body of air with which we are surrounded. What a convincing proof do we here find of the existence of God? Such is the subtlety and transparency of the air, that it receives the rays of the sun and stars, conveying them with inconceivable velocity to objects on the earth, rendering them visible, and decorating the whole surface of the globe with an agreeable intermixture of light, shade, and colors. But still this air has a sufficient consistency and strength to support clouds, and all the winged inhabitants. Had it been less subtile it would have intercepted the light. Had it been more rarified it would not have supported its inhabitants, nor have afforded sufficient moisture for the purposes of respiration. What then but infinite wisdom could have tempered the air so nicely as to give it sufficient strength to support clouds for rain, to afford wind for health, and at the same time to possess the

power of conveying sound and light? How wonderful is this element! How clearly does it discover infinite wisdom, power, and goodness!

5. But when we cast our eyes up to the firmament of heaven we clearly see that it declares God's handiwork. Here the immense theater of God's works opens upon us, and discloses ten thousand magnificent, splendid objects. We dwindle to nothing in comparison of this august scene of beauty, majesty, and glory. Who reared this vast arch over our heads? Who adorned it with so many shining objects, placed at such immense distances from each other, regular in their motions, invariably observing the laws to which they were originally subjected? Who places the sun at such a convenient distance as not to annoy, but to refresh us? Who for so many ages has caused him to rise and set at fixed times? Whose hand directs, and whose power restrains him in his course, causing him to produce the agreeable changes of day and night, as well as the variety of seasons? The order, harmony, and regularity in the revolutions of the heavenly bodies are such incontestible proofs of the existence of God, that an eminent poet well said "an undevout astronomer is mad." In the time of Cicero, when the knowledge of astronomy was very imperfect, he did not hesitate to declare, that in his opinion, the man who asserted the heavenly bodies were not framed and moved by a Divine understanding, was himself void of all understanding. Well indeed is it said that the heavens declare the glory of God.

This great Being is every where present. He exists all around us. He is not, as we are apt to imagine, at a great distance. Wherever we turn, His image meets our view. We see Him in the earth, in the ocean, in the air, in the sun, moon, and stars. We feel Him in ourselves. He is always working round us; He performs the greatest operations, produces the noblest effects, discovers Himself in a thousand different ways, and yet the real GOD remains unseen. All parts of creation are equally under His inspection. Though He warms the breast of the highest angel in heaven, yet He breathes life into the meanest insect on earth. He lives through all His works, supporting all by the word of His power. He shines in the verdure that clothes the plains, in the lily that delights the vale, and in the forest that waves on the mountains. He supports the slender reed that trembles in the breeze, and the sturdy oak that defies the tempest. His presence cheers the inanimate creation.

Far in the wilderness, where human eye never saw, where the savage foot never trod, there He bids the blooming forest smile, and the blushing rose opens its leaves to the morning sun. There He causes the feathered inhabitants to whistle their wild notes to the listening trees and echoing mountains. There nature lives in all her wanton wildness. There the ravished eye, hurrying from scene to scene, is lost in one vast blush of beauty. From the dark stream that rolls through the forest the silver-scaled fish spring up, and dumbly mean the praise of God. Though man remain silent, yet God will have praise. He regards, observes, upholds, connects, and equals all.

The belief of His existence is not a point of mere speculation and amusement. It is of inconceivable importance to our present as well as future felicity. But while we believe there is a God, we should be extremely careful to ascertain, with as much accuracy as possible, what is His real nature. The most prominent features of this are exhibited in that incomprehensible display of wisdom, power, and goodness made in the works of creation. A virtuous man stands in a relation to God which is peculiarly delightful. The Divine perfections are all engaged in his defense. He feels powerful in God's power, wise in His wisdom, good in His goodness. The vicious man, on the contrary, stands in a relation to God which is of all things the most dreadful. He is unwilling to know that God has sufficient wisdom to search out all his wickedness, sufficient goodness to the universe to determine to punish that wickedness, and sufficient power to execute that determination. A firm belief in the existence of God will heighten all the enjoyments of life, and by conforming our hearts to His will, will secure the approbation of a good conscience, and inspire us with the hope of a blessed immortality.

Never be tempted to disbelieve the existence of God, when every thing around you proclaims it in a language too plain not to be understood. Never cast your eyes on creation without having your souls expanded with this sentiment, "There is a God!" When you survey this globe of earth, with all its appendages—when you behold it inhabited by numberless ranks of creatures, all moving in their proper spheres, all verging to their proper ends, all animated by the same great source of life, all supported at the same great bounteous table; when you behold not only the earth, but the ocean and the air, swarming with living creatures, all happy in their situation—when you behold yonder sun darting a vast blaze of glory over the heavens, garnishing mighty worlds, and waking ten thousand songs of praise—when you behold unnumbered systems diffused through vast immensity, clothed in splendor, and rolling in majesty—when you behold these things, your affections will rise above all the vanities of time, your full souls will struggle with ecstasy, and your reason, passions, and feelings, all united, will rush up to the skies, with a devout acknowledgment of the wisdom, existence, power, and goodness of God. Let us behold Him, let us wonder, praise, adore. These things will make us happy. They will wean us from vice, and attach us to virtue.

As a belief of the existence of God is a fundamental point of salvation, he who denies it runs the greatest conceivable hazard. He resigns the satisfaction of a good conscience, quits the hope of a happy immortality, and exposes himself to destruction. All this for what? for the short-lived pleasure of a riotous, dissolute life. How wretched when he finds his atheistical confidence totally destroyed. Instead of His beloved sleep and insensibility, with which he so fondly flattered himself, he will find himself still existing after death, removed to a strange place; he will then find there is a God, who will not suffer his rational beings to fall into annihilation as a refuge from the just punishment of their crimes; he will find himself doomed to drag on a wretched train of existence in unavailing woe and lamentation. Alas! how astonished will he be to find himself plunged into the abyss of ruin and desperation! God forbid that any of us should act so unwisely as to disbelieve, when every thing around us proclaims His existence!

DISCOURSE SEVENTY-THIRD.

EDWARD D. GRIFFIN, D.D.

The eloquent and gifted Griffin was born at East Haddam, Conn., in January, 1770. He graduated at Yale College at the age of twenty, and received his theological education at New Haven. In 1795 he was ordained pastor of the Congregational Church, at New Hartford, Conn. Resigning his charge in this place in the year 1801, he became Colleague Pastor with Dr. M'Whorter of the First Presbyterian Church, Newark, N. J. After an eminently successful ministry of nearly eight years at Newark, he accepted the appointment of Professor of Sacred Rhetoric in the Theological Seminary at Andover, Mass., and was inaugurated in June, 1809. A little more than two years from this time, he removed to Boston, and became pastor of the Park street Church. In 1815 he returned to Newark, and was installed over the Second Presbyterian Church in that city. After serving this people for seven years, he came to the Presidency of Williams College, the duties of which office he performed with great acceptance and usefulness for the next fifteen years. Advancing age and feebleness of health led him to resign this honorable post in 1836; and on the 8th of November, 1837, he ceased from his labors, in the sixty-eighth year of his age.

Dr. Griffin exerted a wide influence in each of the responsible positions which he held. He took an active part in the incipient movements of the great missionary enterprise in this country, which owes much of its success, under God, to his efficient labors and eloquent appeals. As a promoter of revivals of religion, his services were not less important. It has been said of him that the history of his life seems little less than the history of one unbroken revival; and that it would be difficult to find the individual in our country, since the days of Whitfield, who has been the instrument of an equal number of conversions.

In the education of young men for the sacred office of the ministry, his influence was also very great. But Dr. Griffin was most celebrated for his surpassing powers of pulpit oratory. Noble and dignified in his form and bearing, with an eye full of fire, a countenance beaming with light, and a voice capable of breathing forth the softest and gentlest emotions, or swelling into the majesty of thunder-like tones, he held the complete command of his audiences; now coming down upon them to break and to crush with the fury of the tempest; and now bearing them on sweet and transporting accents to the very gate of heaven.

Dr. Griffin's power was to a great extent attributable to his manner; but his sermons, though not of uniform value, are yet for clearness of thought, directness of point, pathos and appeal, among the best specimens in the language. They are valuable as revival sermons. Most of them were written with great care, the author often re-writing and cutting out every thing superfluous. We have met with a brief plan of Dr. Griffin's in writing his sermons, which is worthy of attention, and helps to explain his success. It is as follows: 1. Write down the text on a loose piece of paper and *look at it.* 2. Inquire *what does it teach?* What *shall be my object?* Obtain a clear and definite view of *the point.* 3. Then commence *thinking.* Put down thoughts, as they occur, without regard to order or language—get as much material as possible. 4. Then *reduce these thoughts to order.* This thought belongs under this head; that idea should come in there, etc. 5. *Throw out all extraneous and foreign ideas.* Many of Dr. Griffin's sermons were published in 1839, with an excellent memoir by Rev. W. B. Sprage, D.D. Of late, some sixty more of his sermons have been published in a single volume. That which is here given is not found in any collection of his discourses, but it has been pronounced by a distinguished Professor of Sacred Rhetoric, as well as by others, the best discourse which Dr. Griffin ever wrote. It sparkles, ever and anon, with beautiful pictures, and contains passages, particularly toward the close, which, for grandeur and sublimity, are confessedly among the most splendid efforts of human genius. It was preached before the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in Philadelphia, 1805, and published by request of that body.

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

"For by Him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible, and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, and for Him."—COLOSSIANS, i. 16.

While worldly minds are confined to a few surrounding objects, unconscious of the great scenes above them, like men in a cavern who have never beheld the glories of nature; the devout Christian delights to raise his eyes, and contemplate the perfections of his Creator. He feels a noble and inextinguishable ardor to ascend in meditation to everlasting things, to lose sight of earth in his sublime excursions, to tread the pavements of heaven, to take a near view of God, from that exalted summit to look abroad among his Father's works. The point to which his thoughts aspire, the highest that a created mind can reach, is that from whence he may view the amazing purposes which God is carrying into execution, and by this means discover the moral character of their Author, and the tendency of all things. On this eminence stood the great apostle of the Gentiles, when he pronounced the words of our text. Let us accompany him to that commanding height; and while we view, may the Divine Spirit clear the film from our mental sight, that we may gaze with amazement, adoration, and love.

Placing ourselves at the beginning of time, and looking back into eternity, we are anxious to know what induced the ever blessed God to exercise His power in the production of creatures, and what valuable object He proposed to accomplish by all His works. In order to a right solution of these points, we must conceive an eternal propensity in the fountain of love to overflow, and fill with happiness numberless vessels fitted to receive it. We must conceive an eternal propensity in God to manifest the richness and perfection of His nature to creatures, not for the sake of ostentatious display, but to enrich the universe with the knowledge of His glory, and to lay a foundation for general confidence and delight in Him. A state of unproductive repose was not a condition becoming Himself. As the sun exists in his proper and most glorious state when shedding his beams to bless the dependent planets, so God is conceived to exist in His proper and most glorious state when He is benevolently exercising His perfections on the created system, and, so to speak, hangs them around Him like an external robe of light, to awaken the wonder and joy of creatures. The stupendous object which He contemplated was an immense and beautifully adjusted kingdom of holy and happy creatures, in which He should be acknowledged as the glorious Head, and they should take their proper place at His feet; in which He should be felt as the center of attraction to draw all its parts into union with Himself, and as a sun to shed blessed influence upon the whole; and over which, when its prosperity should be completed, He might "rejoice with joy, and rest in His love."

This was the glorious end which His goodness eternally proposed; and now we are to view the means which He ordained for its accomplishment. The principal means adopted was the appointment of His Son to act as His vicegerent in the creation and government of all worlds, to assume a created nature into personal union with Himself, and thus to fill up the infinite chasm between

God and His creation, and be the grand connecting bond between finite and infinite natures. As head of His Father's kingdom, to which He was to be closely united by His assumed nature, and as the medium of all intercourse between that kingdom and His Father, He was to form the most perfect union between God and His creatures. "As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one." Put forward into a public station, as His Father's organ and image, to be seen by every eye, He was to bring out the invisible God to view from the hidden recesses of His nature—to bring down the incomprehensible God within the reach of finite apprehensions, and to serve as a mild glass through which creatures might view the splendors of divine perfection without dazzling and paining their sight.

This is the Christ, the anointed Agent, of whom our text declares, "By Him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, and *for Him*." This is not said of Him simply as God, but as *the Christ*, who fills a middle place between God and man, and partakes of both natures. The character intended is pointedly marked in the context, every part of which applies only to Christ. The apostle is treating of the Messiah, and describes Him as "the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature, the head of the body, the Church, the first-born from the dead, in whom we have redemption through His blood;" all of which can be understood of Him only as Mediator, and not merely as second person of the Trinity. Can we then acquit the apostle of the charge of introducing a strange confusion of characters, unless our text be allowed to assert that all things were created by the Messiah, and for the Messiah?

The truth I take to be this: All the works which God designed to produce throughout the universe, He delegated Christ to accomplish. All the displays of God which were ever intended to be made to creatures, Christ was appointed to make. The vast plan which involved the whole creation, and all the measures of divine government, was one plan; the execution of which in all its parts, was committed to Christ. It is elsewhere said that all things were made "for God," that is, for the display of His perfections, and for the promotion of that general interest of His kingdom which He benevolently considers His own. In perfect consistency with this, all things are here said to be made for Christ, that is, for the illustration of His mediatorial glory (not indeed as the ultimate and chief end, but rather as the principal mode in which the glory of God was to be displayed) and to subserve the vast plan which He was appointed to execute, in the issue of which God will be "all in all." It would seem, then, that it was in the character of Messiah that He created the angels, the sun, moon, and stars, and all other things, visible and invisible; and that He created them all for Himself as Mediator; in a word, that He created all worlds to subserve His mediatorial plan, the principal scene of which, it is well known, was laid upon this earth. The same apostle, in another place, declares that God "created all things by Jesus Christ"—and why?—"to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known *by the Church* the manifold wisdom of God." In one of his addresses to the Christian Church the apostle expressly asserts, "all things are for your sakes."

Does it seem incredible that all other worlds should be created to promote the purposes of grace upon this earth? Why is this more incredible than that the Mediator should upon this earth "purchase the glory of governing the rest of the universe, and that He should govern the whole with reference to His Church?"—points which are, in the clearest manner, revealed. It is said that "He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death; *wherefore* God also hath highly exalted Him; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all."

What purpose the Mediator intended to answer by other worlds and their inhabitants, in prosecuting the plan of redemption, we do not fully comprehend. The angels, it is well known, are subject to Him as ministering spirits to His Church, and look with prying curiosity and astonishment into the mysteries of redemption. But what use He makes of other worlds we are not told in His Word, further than that they are put under His dominion; and we also know that they serve to instruct His Church, while they influence, adorn, and enlighten the earth on which it resides. And whatever inhabitants they contain, we must believe that they do now, or will in some future period, bend to look into the transcendent wonders of redemption, and will take lessons of deep instruction and interest from the astonishing scenes which are unfolding on the earth.

But, passing by other worlds, the one which we inhabit was certainly made for the Mediator. This is the favored world where He was to assume the nature that was intended to form the connecting link between God and creatures; where He was to found a Church to be "a spectacle to angels and to men;" where He was to display the most august and awful wonder of His death. Here He was to find a miserable race, without help and without hope, immersed in vice and ignorance, groaning under the curse of a holy law, and sinking into everlasting woe. Such an occasion was to be presented for the exercise of His unequaled compassion, for an exhibition of the infinite tenderness of His heart; the history of which is inscribed on the tablet of the earth in tears and blood; the history of which has been a million of times repeated by deeply-affected angels, and will be rehearsed in the songs of the redeemed to eternity. To this earth, and to Calvary, methinks I see every eye directed from the most distant world which God has made. All seem to point to this, and say, "Behold, for once, what infinite love could do!"

The several texts and arguments already adduced prove emphatically that this earth and all its furniture were created for the Mediator. And further to confirm this idea, let me ask, what valuable purpose, except by means of the Mediator, could a world be expected to answer, which, it was foreseen, would so quickly be ruined by sin? What valuable end, in any other way, has it in fact answered? We judge of the design of a thing by the use to which it is put. To what valuable use, then, has the earth been put, but to bring glory to God and good to creatures, "through the mediation of Christ?" If it was designed for the happiness of man, none have tasted happiness in it since the Fall, or found it a passage to heaven but by the Mediator. That Priest only has procured it blessings; that Prophet only has instructed its ignorance; that King only has dispensed its comforts. If it was created for the glory of God, this glory shines only in the face of Jesus Christ. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Him only have men beheld; only His works and providence do men contemplate. Not one purpose desirable to benevolence, or illustrative of the wisdom or goodness of its Author, is answered by the earth, but in consequence of the mediation of Christ. And of all the displays of divine glory, the richest appear in His incarnation and atonement, in the pardon and government which He administers in the Church.

As the earth has in fact answered no desirable purpose, but through the agency of the Mediator, such a fact must have been foreseen in the day of its creation, and it must have been made only for the sake of the good to be accomplished by Christ. It was erected for a theater on which He might make an exhibition of the Divine perfections in redeeming His Church, and punishing His enemies: and this being its design, the work of erecting it was, of course, assigned to Him for whose use it was intended. He formed every continent and ocean, every lake and island, every mountain and valley, to serve a race, who, He foresaw, would fall, and whom He was determined to redeem. He created every beast that ranges the desert, every fowl that flutters under the arch of heaven, every fish that dwells in the caves of the ocean, "every drop, and every dust," to subserve His great design of grace. The whole plan of this world, including creation and providence, including every event from its beginning to the final judgment, was involved in the plan of redemption. The plan is one, though comprehending a vast variety of parts. Among this variety, some parts are designed to fit the earth, by innumerable secret and nameless influences, for the accommodation of a race to be redeemed; others, to unfold the wretched character and condition of men, to illustrate their need of a Saviour, and the richness of redeeming grace. Others are intended to prepare the way for carrying into effect the purposes of mercy, and to facilitate, in many ways, their accomplishment.

Does the question arise, how is it possible that every minute substance and event should be serviceable to the kingdom of Christ? The speaker does not presume to explain all the particular relations and tendencies of God's works; but this, in general, must be granted—"they are all designed to promote the glory of God," though the manner can not be explained. Give me this, and you give me all: for whatever promotes the glory of God was needful to the kingdom of Christ, since the discovery of God to men was an essential part of the plan of restoring them to the enjoyment of Him. The objection that we can not discover the manner in which every thing renders service to Christ, does not disprove our doctrine. If in so simple a device as a manufactory constructed by human art, buildings must be erected, and many machines, instruments, vessels, and different substances employed, the use of some of which a stranger would be unable to explain, though all are subordinate to one end; it is no wonder that the stupendous plan of redeeming a world should contain an inconceivable variety of parts, the subserviency of many of which, though necessary to the result, should elude our research.

As the earth was created for the Mediator, so it is preserved to be the residence of His Church; in allusion to which fact the Church is called "the salt of the earth," as being the occasion of saving it from dissolution.

By Christ, and for Christ, the earth is also governed. Having erected this theater for an exhibition of redeeming grace, He took the management of it into His own hands, and put it to the use for which it was intended. He early established a Church upon it, and in the character of Mediator took into His hands its universal government. Made Head over all things to the Church, He has marched down the tract of ages, holding the north in His right hand, and the south in His left, with His eye immovably fixed upon this single cause, and forcing all nations and events to pay tribute to it. In the history of His government which the Holy Ghost has sketched, we trace His dealings with nations and individuals for many ages, and view His providence under a column of light which discloses its tendency and object. Here we discover His hand employed behind the scene, in directing the affairs of many inferior nations, and especially of the four great empires of antiquity, with pointed reference to His Church. Looking through the glass of prophecy, we discern that throne which Ezekiel saw in his vision, rolling on the wheels of providence down the descent of time to the end of the world, prostrating every interest raised against His Church, and overturning to prepare the way for the full establishment of His kingdom upon earth. Under His government, the apostle expressly declares, "all things work together for good" to His Church; "all things are theirs, whether the world—or things present, or things to come." The revolutions of empires, rebellions and wars, the counsels of kings, and the debates of senates, are all pressed into the service of Christ. Bibles, sacraments, Sabbaths, and the effusions of the Holy Spirit, have no other object. Seed-time and harvest, famine and pestilence, tempests, volcanoes, and earthquakes, are all made to advance His interest.

As this world was wholly intended for the scene of redemption, "all the good which it contains" belongs to the plan of grace that was laid in Christ. His kingdom comprises every valuable object which God proposed to Himself in creating, preserving, and governing the world—the whole amount of His glory upon earth, and the immortal blessedness of millions of men. It is the only cause on earth that is worth an anxious thought. It is the only interest which God pursues or values, and the only object worthy of the attention of men. For this sole object were they created, and placed in this world, with social affections adapted to their present state, with employments appointed for the preservation of their lives. No one interest distinct from the kingdom of Christ are they required to pursue. No laws but those which appertain to this kingdom, and which of course respect only the concerns of it, were ever enacted by heaven to direct their conduct. Their secular employments, their social duties, are enjoined only as subordinate to the interests of this kingdom. Their private and social propensities they are not indeed required to extinguish; but with these about them, to march with a strong and steady step directly toward this great object, with their eye filled with its magnitude, and with hearts glowing with desires for its promotion. It is required that "whether they eat or drink, or whatever they do, they should do all" with reference to this object.

As then, we can rely on the decision of infinite wisdom, expressed both in the example and precepts of God, we are assured that this kingdom ought to engross the supreme cares of men, and exert a commanding influence over all their actions; that it should be the great object of their lives, and their governing motive every hour. The bosom of the child should be taught to beat with delight at the name of Jesus, before it is capable of comprehending the nature of his kingdom. The youth ought to regulate all his pleasures, his actions, and his hopes, with an eye fixed on this kingdom. The man ought to respect it in every important undertaking, in all his common concerns, in the expressions of his lips, in the government of his passions, in the thoughts of his heart. Not worldly emolument or distinction, but the interest of the blessed Redeemer, should be his highest object—should be daily and hourly loved and sought with all his heart and soul. To this should he consecrate all his talents, all his influence, all his wealth. Instead of pursuing with headlong zeal their separate interests, all men should join in promoting this kingdom, as the common interest of mankind—the great concern for which they were sent into the world.

If the eyes of men were opened, they would see this cause to be of infinite value—worthy to be the object for which all things were created. It is the cause which not only all the energies of nature, but all beings and agents, conspire to advance. It is the beloved cause on which the heart of the Son of God was set, when it beat in the babe of Bethlehem, and when it bled on the point of the spear. It is the cause to which angels have zealously ministered; to which devils have involuntarily lent their aid. It is the cause which has engaged the ardent attention of wise and good men in every age. It is the cause for which patriarchs prayed, for which prophets taught, for which apostles toiled, for which martyrs bled. For the consummation of this cause upon earth many eyes have waited, from age to age, in unwearied expectation; "many prophets and righteous men have desired to see it;" many who sealed their faith with their blood, looked forward to this glorious event with eyes glistening in the agonies of death. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together" to bring forth this grand consummation.

The cause of Christ is the only one which will prevail and live amid the wrecks of time. Strong as the arm of Omnipotence, it will hold on in its majestic course, bearing down and crushing every thing that resists its progress. Every interest that is placed on this foundation is safe; but inevitable ruin awaits every thing beside. Woe to the man whose destinies are not united with the kingdom of Christ! Woe, woe to the man who sets himself to oppose this holy kingdom!

Though at present disregarded by men, the kingdom of Christ is destined to engage the profound attention of all nations. It is destined to banish from the abodes of men the miserable effects of the fall, and to restore all the tribes of the earth to themselves and to God. When the glories of this kingdom shall cover all lands—when, after a long succession of wintery years, the spring-time of the world shall come, when the beauties of holiness shall clothe every region, and songs of salvation shall float in every breeze; then will it be seen that the world was not made in vain. It is transporting to look down the vale of time, and see the miseries of six thousand years come to an end, the convulsions of a disordered world composed, and the glory of Zion filling all the earth.

Lend me an angel's harp, while I look forward to approaching scenes, which, distant as they then were, enraptured the souls of the holy prophets. How divinely did they sing, when, from the mount of vision, they beheld across the shade of many troublous years the Church standing on the field she had won, triumphantly shouting, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation!" Sometimes in the midst of their sorrows, while nothing was escaping them but the sounds of a breaking heart, a glimpse of this glory would break upon their view; and then the tear which stood in their eye forgot to fall, their half-uttered sigh died upon their tongue, they awoke to rapture, and exclaimed, "Thou shalt arise and have mercy on Zion, for the time to favor her, yea the set time is come."

The Church has hitherto possessed but a small proportion of a world created for its use; but the day is drawing on, when "the everlasting Gospel shall be preached to every kindred, and tongue, and people;" when "from the rising of the sun, unto the going down of the same, the name of the Lord shall be great among the Gentiles;" when "all shall know Him from the least to the greatest, for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Their sun shall no more go down, nor their moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be their everlasting light, and the days of their mourning shall be ended." A thousand times ten thousand captives shall drop their chains, and come forth to light, with joys too big for utterance; and this miserable world, once the emblem of hell; this miserable world, after being so long shaken with tempests, shall, like the waters of a peaceful pool, reflect the image of heaven. Paradise shall be restored; and then shall appear, to the confusion of all the enemies of Christ, the blessed efficacy of His Gospel to heal the wounds of a bleeding world. *This* is the triumph of the woman's seed; *this*, the bruising of the serpent's head. Is not every Christian rapt as he thus views from Pisgah the promised rest on earth? Is enthusiasm here a crime? Would not coldness be rebellion? Come, Thou desire of nations, come! Come, Thou restorer of a world!

Lo, a still more transporting sight appears! My ravished eye beholds the kingdom of Christ advanced to the glories of the heavenly state. Faith looks through the vail which conceals the eternal world, and discerns thousands of millions of happy beings, ransomed from destruction and brought home to their Father's house; it beholds the Church encircling the throne of her Redeemer, casting her honors at His feet, buried in the ocean of His glory, united to the Father by ineffable relation, while all heaven is ringing with hosannas for redeeming love: "there, there is the august kingdom completed which God at first undertook to erect!"

Say now—pronounce—is not the object worthy of all the means employed for its attainment? Do you hesitate? Look, and think again! Follow only one human soul into eternity; trace its endless course through delights which flesh and blood could not sustain, or through fire sufficient to melt down all the planets; pursue it through the ascending degrees of its eternal progression; see it leaving behind the former dimensions of seraphim and cherubim, and still stretching toward God, or sinking forever in the bottomless abyss. My God! what an event is the redemption of a single soul! O the infinite mercy that redeemed such countless millions! O the boundless compassion of Christ—the ocean without a bottom or a shore! "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God," which are disclosed in this unfathomable plan of grace!

Where are infatuated infidels now? Bring up hither all their bands to behold the glorious Agent, and the glorious interest, which they oppose! Julian, Celsus, and Porphyry, what *now* think you of Christ! Voltaire, Hume, Gibbon, and Bolingbroke—where are now those tongues which blasphemed the anointed Messiah? Let our subject burst like ten thousand thunders upon those, who, in rejecting the Mediator, resist all the designs of God—who would destroy the only interest of the universe—who are fatally contending with all the energies of Omnipotence!

Oh that I had a voice to reach the hearts of impenitent sinners of every class! Knew ye the infinite glories of our Messiah, the darling of heaven, the wonder of angels, the august Agent of the universe; knew ye your ruin and necessities; knew ye the tenderness of Him who wept because you would sin—who, to save your wretched souls, sweat drops of blood, and expired on the ragged irons; you would not thus idly pass by His reeking cross, you would not thus refuse Him reverence, and coldly cast away the benefits of His dying love!

In applying this subject I would summon, were I able, all the kingdoms of the earth to arise in one mass to urge forward the cause of the Redeemer. Assemble, ye people, from the four quarters of the globe! Awake, ye nations, from your sleeping pillow—combine in this grand object of your existence—this common interest of the world! Ye kindreds and tribes, why are ye searching for happiness out of this kingdom, and overlooking the cause of Christ, as though He had no right to hold an interest on earth? Know ye that no man is licensed to set up another interest on this ground which is sacred to the Redeemer. What have you to do in this world if you will not serve the Lord's Anointed? If you will not submit to His dominion, and join to advance His cause, go, go to some other world—this world was made for Christ! But whither can you go from His presence? All worlds are under His dominion. Ah! then return, and let your bosoms swell with the noble desire to be fellow-workers with the inhabitants of other worlds in serving this glorious kingdom.

My brethren, my brethren! while all the agents in the universe are employed, some with fervent desire, and others by involuntary instrumentality, to advance the cause of Christ, will an individual of you refuse it your cordial support? Can you, in the center of universal action, consent to remain in a torpid state, absorbed in private cares, and contracted into a littleness for which you were not designed? Awake, and generously expand your desires to encircle this benevolent and holy kingdom! God, who has set you an example of exclusive regard to this object, demands it of you. Christ, who purchased the Church with His blood, demands it of you. The holy angels, who incessantly minister to the Church, demand it of you. The illustrious army of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, by their services and sufferings for the Church, demand it of you. How, then, can you meet the eyes of this awful company of spectators, who watch you from every window of heaven, unless you rouse every sleeping faculty, and with your collected powers, join to advance the kingdom of the Redeemer?

My brethren, there is much for you to do. Though the world was made for Christ, though all the nations of it are intended to swell His triumph, yet at this very moment, five parts out of six of that race for whom He shed His sacred blood, are perishing in ignorance of His Gospel, chained in miserable and degrading servitude to Satan. Many of them are also suffering all the hardships of a barbarous state, without domestic or civil order, wallowing in the sinks of vice, and besmearing the altars of devils with human blood. Touched with affection for Him who pitied us that we might pity others—for Him who, "though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich;" can we forbear to cherish the pious wish that He may enjoy the reward of His dying love? Do not our hearts throb with desire to be instrumental in giving Him "the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession?"

Distinguished will be the glory of that generation who shall be selected to bear a conspicuous part in this blessed work. If those who are now alive on the earth decline this honor, it will certainly be seized by a more generous and holy posterity. To the present generation, however, it seems fairly tendered by the existing indications of Divine providence. Great events appear to be struggling in their birth. In the eager attitude of hope, many are looking for the dawn of a better day, and even believe that they already see the light purpling the east. The Christian world, after long contenting itself with prayers for the heathen, and with saying, "Be ye warmed and filled," is awaking to more charitable views. Men, warmed with apostolic zeal, have abandoned the comforts of civilized life, and are gone to the ends of the earth, to bear to benighted nations the first tidings of a precious Saviour. Numerous societies have risen into existence on both sides of the Atlantic, under whose patronage missionaries are now employed from India to the American wilderness, from Greenland to the southern ocean. Some of the first fruits of their labors, I hope, are already gathered into the heavenly garner.

While our brethren are thus summoning us from the four quarters of the earth to "come up to the help of the Lord," let us not incur the curse of Meroz; let us quickly put our hands to the work lest it be done without us. "If we altogether hold our peace at this time, then shall there enlargement arise from another place; but we and our father's house may be destroyed." But why should I thus speak? You, my brethren, have already felt the heavenly impulse; you have given to the Lord; and the affecting accounts of your missionaries show that you have received, thus early, the blessing of some who were ready to perish.

Let us still pursue the glorious design, and rise above every objection which a cold, calculating spirit may cast in our way. We are bound to persevere by the express command to "go forth into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." We are bound by mercies which we ourselves have received. Had not benevolent men devoted their property and lives to bring the Gospel to our fathers, we might, this evening, have been assembled, not in this temple of God, but to sacrifice our children on the altar of devils. Methinks I hear those generous spirits crying from the verge of heaven, "Freely ye have received, freely give."

Let me never fall into the hands of the man who, while He refuses to aid the missionary efforts of his brethren, coolly says that he submits the fate of the heathen to God. Do you call this submission? Put it to the test; does it preserve you equally composed by the bed of your dying child? While the pressure of private afflictions can torture your soul, call not the apathy with which you view nations sinking into hopeless ruin—call it not submission, nor bring the government of God to sanction a temper as cruel as it is common! Will the government of God convert the heathen without the means of grace? What nation was ever so converted? It is contrary to the established method of Divine grace. "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?"

No, my brethren, missionaries *must* go among them, and they *must be supported.* They can not support themselves; they can not derive support from the heathen; nor can they expect to be "fed by ravens." Who then shall sustain the expense, if not the Christian world? and what portion of the Christian world rather than the American churches? and what district of these churches rather than that in which we are assembled? and what individuals rather than ourselves? Heaven has given us the means; we are living in prosperity on the very lands from which the wretched pagans have been ejected; from the recesses of whose wilderness a moving cry is heard, When it is well with you, think of poor Indians. This is not ideal; we have received such messages written with their tears.

No, we will not shift this honorable burden upon others. We would sooner contend for it as a privilege. But we need not contend; it is ample enough to satisfy the desires of all. The expense of Christianizing only the savages on our borders will be great; but to extend effectual aid to all the benighted tribes on the American continent, to the numerous islands, to the vast regions of Asia and Africa, would demand the resources of Christendom. Every man is under bonds to God to bear his full proportion of this expense. For whom but for the Redeemer was your wealth created? Thus saith the Lord, "Your silver and your gold are mine." The flocks of Kedar and the gold of Sheba were created to bring tribute to His Church. Should we sordidly close our hands against Him, He can, with infinite ease, extort a hundredfold, by sending a blast into our fields, a disease into our families, or a fire into our dwellings.

It is a maxim that admits of general application, "Whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for Christ's sake, the same shall save it." "The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given will He pay him again." By one shower of rain, by one restraint upon the winds that would sink your ship, by one breeze sent to fan from your door the pestilental vapor, He can repay you. And He can bestow the blessings of eternity on you and your children. The best security for remuneration is offered. He tenders you His blessing to reward your charity. And now are you Christians? The trial is to be made. The everlasting fates of men turn upon the existence of a temper to prefer the blessing of God to mammon. "To the merciful He will show Himself merciful; but whose stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard."

"I have nothing to spare," is the plea of sordid reluctance. But a far different sentiment will be formed amid the scenes of the last day. Men now persuade themselves that they have nothing to spare till they can support a certain style of luxury, and have provided for the establishment of children. But in the awful hour when you, and I, and all the pagan nations, shall be called from our graves to stand before the bar of Christ, what comparison will these objects bear to the salvation of a single soul! Eternal mercy! let not the blood of heathen millions, in that hour, be found in our skirts!

Standing, as I now do, in sight of a dissolving universe, beholding the dead arise, the world in flames, the heavens fleeing away, all nations convulsed with terror, or rapt in the vision of the Lamb—I pronounce the conversion of a single pagan of more value than all the wealth that ever Omnipotence produced! On such an awful subject it becomes me to speak with caution; but I solemnly aver, that were there but one heathen in the world, and he in the remotest corner of Asia, if no greater duty confined us at home, it would be worth the pains for all the people in America to embark together to carry the Gospel to him. Place your soul in His soul's stead! Or rather, consent for a moment to change condition with the savages on our borders. Were *you* posting on to the judgment of the great day, in the darkness and pollution of pagan idolatry, and were *they* living in wealth in this very district of the Church, how hard would it seem for your neighbors to neglect your misery! When you should open your eyes in the eternal world, and discover the ruin in which they had suffered you to remain, how would you reproach them that they did not even sell their possessions, if no other means were sufficient, to send the Gospel to you. My flesh trembles at the prospect! But they *shall not* reproach us. It shall be known in heaven that we could pity our brethren. We will send them all the relief in our power, and will enjoy the luxury of reflecting what happiness we may entail on generations yet unborn, if we can only effect the conversion of a single tribe.

All that remains for me to add is a fervent prayer, that He who is viewing from heaven the events of this evening may incline your hearts to the noblest charity, and may reward it with everlasting blessings on you and your children. Amen.

DISCOURSE SEVENTY-FOURTH.

JOHN M. MASON, D.D.

THIS distinguished divine and pulpit orator, was born in the city of New York, in 1770; where he also graduated at Columbia College, in 1789. Having studied theology with his father, he completed his studies in Europe. Returning to America, he succeeded his father in the pastorate of the Cedar street Church, in 1792. In 1812 he became pastor of a new Church in Murray-street. He had also accepted the appointment of provost in Columbia College; which office he filled until compelled to visit Europe, in 1816, on account of ill health. On his return, in 1817, he resumed preaching; but in 1821 took charge of Dickinson College, Penn., having already suffered from two paralytic attacks. From this cause it was impossible to perform arduous labor; and in 1824 he returned to New York, where he lingered the rest of his days. He died in December, 1829.

Dr. Mason wrote extensively for essays and reviews, and published, during his lifetime, several orations and sermons. His works have been collated and published in four volumes, 8vo.

The mind of Dr. Mason was of the most vigorous order, his theology Calvinistic, and his piety and zeal worthy of imitation. He was eminent as a pulpit orator, his eloquence being powerful and irresistible. It is said that when Robert Hall heard him preach, in 1802, he exclaimed, "I can never preach again!" The two discourses of this great preacher which are most celebrated, are his "Messiah's Throne," and his "Gospel for the Poor"—which is given below. Dr. Mason evidently gave preference to the latter, by its frequent repetition. We are informed, on good authority, that during a Southern tour for his health, having committed to memory this sermon, he preached it every where he went, and with the most marked effect. Dr. Spring, in his "Power of the Pulpit," thus describes the scene of the delivery of this discourse in New Haven, in the year 1808. "The sun had just risen, when torrents of men were seen pouring to the house of God. There were ministers of the Gospel, both the aged and the young. Learned Professors, reflecting Judges of the law, and Lawyers in their pride, were there.

There were Senators and men of learning from every part of the land. There sat the venerable Dwight, and the not less venerable Backus, melted into a *flood* of tears. That vast auditory, which seemed at first only to listen with interest, and then gaze with admiration, with few exceptions, covered their faces and wept."

THE GOSPEL FOR THE POOR.

"To the poor the Gospel is preached."—LUKE, vii. 22.

The Old Testament closes with a remarkable prediction concerning Messiah and His forerunner. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." Accordingly, at the appointed time, came John the Baptist, "in the spirit and power of Elias," saying, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." In his great work of "preparing the way of the Lord," he challenged sin without respect of persons. The attempt was hazardous; but, feeling the majesty of his character, he was not to be moved by considerations which divert or intimidate the ordinary man. Name, sect, station, were alike to him. Not even the imperial purple, when it harbored a crime, afforded protection from his rebuke. His fidelity in this point cost him his life. For having "reproved Herod, for Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done," he was thrown into prison, and at length sacrificed to the most implacable of all resentments, the resentment of an abandoned woman.

It was in the interval between his arrest and execution, that he sent to Jesus the message on which my text is grounded. As his office gave him no security against the workings of unbelief in the hour of temptation, it is not strange, if in a dungeon and in chains, his mind was invaded by an occasional doubt. The question by two of His disciples, "Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" has all the air of an inquiry for personal satisfaction; and so his Lord's reply seems to treat it. "Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached." The answer is clear and convincing. It enumerates the very signs by which the Church was to know her God, "for whom she had waited;" and they were enough to remove the suspicions, and confirm the soul, of His servant John.

Admitting that Jesus Christ actually wrought the works here ascribed to Him, every sober man will conclude with Nicodemus, "We know that Thou art a teacher from God; for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him." It is not, however, my intention to dwell on the miraculous evidence of Christianity. The article which I select as exhibiting it in a plain but interesting view, is, "the preaching of Gospel to the poor."

In Scriptural language, "the poor," who are most exposed to suffering and least able to encounter it, represent all who are destitute of good necessary to their perfection and happiness; especially those who feel their want, and are disconsolate; especially those who are anxiously "waiting for the consolation of Israel." Thus in Psalms, "I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me." Thus in Isaiah, "When the poor and needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst; I, the Lord will hear them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them." Thus also, "The Lord hath annointed me to preach good tidings to the meek;" the same word with that rendered "poor;" and so it is translated by Luke, "To preach the Gospel to the poor;" which is connected, both in the prophet and evangelist, with "healing the broken-hearted." Our Lord, therefore, refers John, as He did the Jews in the synagogue at Nazareth, to this very prediction as fulfilled in Himself. So that His own definition of His own religion is, "a system of consolation for the wretched." This is so far from excluding the "literal poor," that the success of the Gospel with them is the pledge of its success with all others: for they not only form the majority of the human race, but they also bear the chief burden of its calamities. Moreover, as the sources of pleasure and pain are substantially the same in all men; and as affliction, by suspending the influence of their artificial distinctions, reduces them to the level of their common nature; whatever, by appealing to the principles of that nature, promotes the happiness of the multitude, must equally promote the happiness of the residue; and whatever consoles the one, must, in like circumstances, console the other also. As we can not, therefore, maintain the suitableness of the Gospel to the literal poor, who are the mass of mankind, without maintaining its prerogative of comforting the afflicted; nor, on the contrary, its prerogative of comforting, separately from its suitableness to the mass of mankind, I shall consider these two ideas as involving each other.

With this explanation, the first thing which demands your notice, is the fact itself—"Gospel preached to the poor."

From the remotest antiquity there have been, in all civilized nations, men who devoted themselves to the increase of knowledge and happiness. Their speculations were subtile, their arguings acute, and many of their maxims respectable. But to whom were their instructions addressed? To casual visitors, to selected friends, to admiring pupils, to privileged orders! In some countries, and on certain occasions, when vanity was to be gratified by the acquisition of fame, their appearances were more public. For example, one read a poem, another a history, and a third a play, before the crowd assembled at the Olympic games. To be crowned there, was, in the proudest period of Greece, the summit of glory and ambition. But what did this, what did the mysteries of pagan worship, or what the lectures of pagan philosophy, avail the people? Sunk in ignorance, in poverty, in crime, they lay neglected. Age succeeded age, and school to school; a thousand sects and systems rose, flourished, and fell; but the degradation of the multitude remained. Not a beam of light found its way into their darkness, nor a drop of consolation into their cup. Indeed a plan of raising them to the dignity of rational enjoyment, and fortifying them against the disasters of life, was not to be expected: for as nothing can exceed the contempt in which they were held by the professors of wisdom; so any human device, however captivating in theory, would have been worthless in fact. The most sagacious heathen could imagine no better means of improving them than the precepts of his philosophy. Now, supposing it to be ever so salutary, its benefits must have been confined to a very few; the notion that the bulk of mankind may become philosophers, being altogether extravagant. They ever have been, and, in the nature of things, ever must be, unlearned. Besides, the groveling superstition and brutal manners of the heathen, presented insuperable obstacles. Had the plan of their cultivation been even suggested, especially if it comprehended the more abject of the species, it would have been universally derided, and would have merited derision, no less than the dreams of modern folly about the perfectibility of man.

Under this incapacity of instructing the poor, how would the pagan sage have acquitted himself as their comforter? His dogmas, during prosperity and health, might humor his fancy, might flatter his pride, or dupe his understanding; but against the hour of grief or dissolution he had no solace for himself, and could have none for others. I am not to be persuaded, in contradiction to every principle of my animal and rational being, that pain, and misfortune, and death, are no evils; and are beneath a wise man's regard. And could I work myself up into so absurd a conviction, how would it promote my comfort? Comfort is essentially consistent with nature and truth. By perverting my judgment, by hardening my heart, by chilling my nobler warmth, and stifling my best affections, I may grow stupid; but shall be far enough from consolation. Convert me into a beast, and I shall be without remorse; into a block, and I shall feel no pain. But this was not my request. I asked you for consolation, and you destroy my ability to receive it. I asked you to bear me over death, in the fellowship of immortals, and you begin by transforming me into a monster! Here are no glad tidings: nothing to cheer the gloom of outward or inward poverty. And the pagan teacher could give me no better. From him, therefore, the miserable, even of his own country, and class, and kindred, had nothing to hope. But to "lift the needy from the dunghill," and wipe away the tears from the mourner; to lighten the burdens of the heart; to heal its maladies, repair its losses, and enlarge its enjoyments; and that under every form of penury and sorrow, in all nations, and ages, and circumstances; as it is a scheme too vast for the human faculties, so, had it been committed to merely human execution, it could not have proceeded a single step, and would have been remembered only as a frantic reverie.

Yet all this hath Christianity undertaken. Her voice is, without distinction, to people of every color, and clime, and condition: to the continent and the isles; to the man of the city, the man of the field, and the man of the woods; to the Moor, the Hindoo, and the Hottentot; to the sick and desperate; to the beggar, the convict, and the slave. She impairs no faculty, interdicts no affection, infringes no relation; but, taking men as they are, with all their depravity and woes, she proffers them peace and blessedness. Her boasting is not vain. The course of experiment has lasted through more than fifty generations of men. It is passing every hour before our eyes; and, for reasons to be afterward assigned, has never failed, in a single instance, when it has been fairly tried.

The design is stupendous; and the least success induces us to inquire, by whom it was projected and carried into effect. And what is our astonishment, when we learn, that it was by men of obscure birth, mean education, and feeble resource; by men from a nation hated for their religion, and proverbial for their moroseness; by carpenters, and tax-gatherers, and fishermen of Judea! What shall we say of this phenomenon? A recurrence to the Jewish Scriptures, which had long predicted it, either surrenders the argument, or increases the difficulty. If you admit that they reveal futurity, you recognize the finger of God, and the controversy is at an end. If you call them mere conjectures, you are still to account for their correspondence with the event, and to explain how great a system of benevolence, unheard, unthought of by learned antiquity, came to be cherished, to be transmitted for centuries from father to son, and at length attempted among the Jews! And you are also contradicted by the fact, that however clearly such a system is marked out in their Scriptures, they were so far from adopting it, that they entirely mistook it; rejected it, nationally, with disdain; persecuted unto death those who embarked in it; and have not embraced it to this day! Yet in the midst of this bigoted and obstinate people, sprang up the deliverance of the human race. "Salvation is of the Jews." Within half a century after the resurrection of Christ, His disciples had penetrated to the extremes of the Roman empire, and had carried the "day-spring from on high" to innumerable tribes who were "sitting in the region and shadow of death." And so exclusively Christian is this plan, so remote from the sphere of common effort, that after it has been proposed and executed, men revert perpetually to to their wonted littleness and carelessness. The whole face of Christendom is overspread with proofs, that, in proportion as they depart from the simplicity of the Gospel, they forget the multitude as before, and the doctrines of consolation expire. In so far, too, as they adapt, to their own notions of propriety, the general idea, which they have borrowed from the Gospel, of meliorating the condition of their species, they have produced, and are every day producing, effects the very reverse of their professions. Discontent, and confusion, and crimes, they propagate in abundance. They have smitten the earth with curses, and deluged it with blood. But the instance is yet to be discovered, in which they have "bound up the broken-hearted." The fact, therefore, that Christianity is, in the broadest sense of the terms, "glad tidings to the poor," is perfectly original. It stands without rival or comparison. It has no foundation in the principles of human enterprise; and could never have existed without the inspiration of that "Father of lights, from whom cometh down every good and every perfect gift."

II. As the Christian fact is original, so the reasons of its efficacy are peculiar. Christianity can afford consolation, because it is fitted to our nature and character. I specify particulars:

First. The Gospel proceeds upon the principle of immortality.

That our bodies shall die is indisputable. But that reluctance of nature, that panting after life, that horror of annihilation, of which no man can completely divest himself, connect the death of the body with deep solicitude. While neither these, nor any other merely rational considerations, ascertain the certainty of future being, much less of future bliss. The feeble light which glimmered around this point among the heathen, flowed not from investigation, but tradition. It was to be seen chiefly among the vulgar, who inherited the tales of their fathers; and among the poets, who prefered popular fable to philosophic speculation. Reason would have pursued her discovery; but the pagans knew not how to apply the notion of immortality, even when they had it. It governed not their precepts; it established not their hope. When they attempted to discuss the grounds of it, "they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." The best arguments of Socrates are unworthy of a child, who has "learned the holy Scriptures." And it is remarkable enough, that the doctrine of immortality is as perfectly detached and as barren of moral effect, in the hands of modern infidels, as it was in the hands of the ancient pagans. They have been so unable to assign it a convenient place in their system; they have found it to be so much at variance with their habits, and so troublesome in their warfare with the Scriptures, that the more resolute of the sect have discarded it altogether. With the soberer part of them it is no better than an opinion; but it never was, and never will be, a source of true consolation, in any system or any bosom, but the system of Christianity and the bosom of the Christian. Life and immortality, about which some have guessed, for which all have sighed, but of which none could trace the relations or prove the existence, are not merely hinted, they "are brought to light by the Gospel." This is the parting point with every other religion; and yet the very point upon which our happiness hangs. That we shall survive the body, and pass from its dissolution to the bar of God, and from the bar of God to endless retribution, are truths of infinite moment and of pure revelation. They demonstrate the incapacity of temporal things to content the soul. They explain why grandeur, and pleasure, and fame leave the heart sad. He who pretends to be my comforter without consulting my immortality overlooks my essential want. The Gospel supplies it. Immortality is the basis of her fabric. She resolves the importance of man into its true reason—the value of his soul. She sees under every human form, however ragged or abused, a spirit unalterable by external change, unassailable by death, and endued with stupendous faculties of knowledge and action, of enjoyment and suffering;

a spirit, at the same time, depraved and guilty; and therefore liable to irreparable ruin. These are Christian views. They elevate us to a height at which the puny theories of the world stand and gaze. They stamp new interest on all my relations and all my acts. They hold up before me objects vast as my wishes, terrible as my fears, and permanent as my being. They bind me to eternity.

Secondly. Having thus unfolded the general doctrine of immortality, the Gospel advances further, informing us that although a future life is sure, future blessedness is by no means a matter of course. This receives instant confirmation from a review of our character as sinners.

None but an atheist, or, which is the same thing, a madman, will deny the existence of moral obligation, and the sanction of moral law. In other words, that it is our duty to obey God, and that He has annexed penalties to disobedience. As little can it be denied that we have actually disobeyed Him. Guilt has taken up its abode in the conscience, and indicates, by signs not to be misunderstood, both its presence and power. To call this superstition betrays only that vanity which thinks to confute a doctrine by giving it an ill name. Depravity and its consequences meet us, at every moment, in a thousand shapes; nor is there an individual breathing who has escaped its taint. Therefore our relations to our Creator as innocent creatures have ceased; and are succeeded by the relation of rebels against His government. In no other light can He contemplate us, because His "judgment is according to truth." A conviction of this begets alarm and wretchedness. And, whatever some may pretend, a guilty conscience is the secret worm which preys upon the vitals of human peace; the invisible spell which turns the draught of pleasure into wormwood and gall. To laugh at it as an imaginary evil is the mark of a fool; for what can be more rational than to tremble at the displeasure of an almighty God? If, then, I ask how I am to be delivered? or whether deliverance is possible? human reason is dumb; or if she open her lips, it is only to tease me with conjectures, which evince that she knows nothing of the matter. Here the Christian verity interferes; showing me, on the one hand, that my alarm is well founded; that my demerit and danger are far beyond even my own suspicions; that God, with whom I have to do, "will by no means clear the guilty;" but, on the other hand, revealing the provision of His infinite wisdom and grace, for relieving me from guilt. "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The more I ponder this method of salvation, the more I am convinced that it displays the divine perfection and exalts the divine government; so that "it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Now I know where to obtain the first requisite to happiness, pardon of sin. In Christ Jesus, the Lord, is that justifying righteousness, the want of which, though I was ignorant of the cause, kept me miserable till this hour. I cling to it, and am safe. His precious blood "purges my conscience." It "extends peace to me as a river, and the glory of redemption like a flowing stream." My worst fears are dispelled; "the wrath to come" is not for me; I can look with composure at futurity, and feel joy springing up with the thought that I am immortal.

Thirdly. In addition to deliverance from wrath, Christianity provides relief against the "plague of the heart."

It will not be contested, that disorder reigns among the passions of men. The very attempts to rectify it are a sufficient concession; and their ill success shows their authors to have been physicians of no value. That particular ebullitions of passion have been repressed, and particular habits of vice overcome, without Christian aid, is admitted. But if any one shall conclude that these are examples of victory of the principle of depravity, he will greatly err. For, not to insist that the experience of the world is against him, we have complete evidence that all reformations, not evangelical, are merely an exchange of lusts; or rather, the elevation of one evil appetite by the depression of another; the strength of depravity continuing the same; its form only varied. Nor can it be otherwise. Untaught of God, the most comprehensive genius is unable either to trace the original of corruption, or to check its force. It has its fountain where he least and last believes it to be; but where the Omniscient eye has searched it out; in the human heart; the heart, filled with enmity against God—the heart, "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." But, the discovery being made, his measures, you hope, will take surer effect. Quite the contrary. It now defies his power, as it formerly did his wisdom. How have disciples of the moral school studied and toiled! how have they resolved, and vowed, and fasted, watched and prayed, traveling through the whole circuit of devout austerities! and set down at last, "wearied in the greatness of their way!" But no marvel! the "Ethiopian can not change his skin, nor the leopard his spots." Neither can impurity purify itself. Here again, light from the footsteps of the Christian truth breaks in upon the darkness; and Gospel again flows from her tongue; the Gospel of a new heart—the Gospel of regenerating and sanctifying grace; as the promise, the gift, the work of God. "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you; a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh; and I will give you a heart of flesh; and I will put My spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments and do them." Here all our difficulties are resolved at once. The spirit of life in Christ Jesus, quickens "the dead in trespasses and sins. The Lord, our strength, works in us all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power." That which was impossible with men, is not so with Him; for "with Him all things are possible; even the subduing of our iniquities;" creating us anew, after His own image, "in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness;" turning our polluted souls into His own "habitation through the Spirit;" and making us "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." Verily this is Gospel; worthy to go in company with remission of sin. And shall I conquer at last? Shall I, indeed, be delivered from the bondage and the torment of corruption? A new sensation passes through my breast. "I lift up mine eyes to the hills from whence cometh my help;" and with the hope of "perfecting holiness in the fear of God," hail my immortality.

Fourthly. Having thus removed our guilt, and cleansed our affections, the Gospel proceeds to put us in possession of adequate enjoyment. An irresistible law of our being impels us to seek happiness. Nor will a million of frustrated hopes deter from new experiments; because despair is infinitely more excruciating than the fear of fresh disappointment. But an impulse, always vehement and never successful, multiplies the materials and inlets of pain. This assertion carries with it its own proof; and the principle it assumes is verified by the history of our species. In every place, and at all times, ingenuity has been racked to meet the ravenous desires. Occupation, wealth, dignity, science, amusement, all have been tried; are all tried at this hour; and all in vain. The heart still repines: the unappeased cry is, Give, give. There is a fatal error somewhere; and the Gospel detects it. Fallen away from God, we have substituted the creature in His place. This is the grand mistake: the fraud which sin has committed upon our nature. The Gospel reveals God as the satisfying good, and brings it within our reach. It proclaims him reconciled in Christ Jesus, as our father, our friend, our portion. It introduces us into His presence with liberty to ask in the Intercessor's name, and asking, to "receive, that our joy may be full." It keeps us under His eye; surrounds us with His arm; feeds us upon "living bread" which He "gives from heaven:" seals us up to an eternal inheritance; and even engages to reclaim our dead bodies from the grave, and fashion them in beauty, which shall vie with heaven! It is enough! My prayers and desires can go no further: I have got to the "fountain of living waters—Return to thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee!"

This Gospel of immortality, in righteousness, purity, and bliss, would be inestimable, were it even obscure, and not to be comprehended without painful scrutiny. But I observe again,

Fifthly. That, unlike the systems of men, and contrary to their anticipations, the Gospel is as simple as it is glorious. Its primary doctrines, though capable of exercising the most disciplined talent, are adapted to the common understanding. Were they dark and abstruse, they might gratify a speculative mind, but would be lost upon the multitude, and be unprofitable to all, as doctrines of consolation. The mass of mankind never can be profound reasoners. To omit other difficulties, they have not leisure. Instruction, to do them good, must be interesting, solemn, repeated, and plain. This is the benign office of the Gospel. Her principle topics are few; they are constantly recurring in various connections; they come home to every man's condition; they have an interpreter in his bosom; they are enforced by motives which honesty can hardly mistake, and conscience will rarely dispute. Unlettered men, who love their Bible, seldom quarrel about the prominent articles of faith and duty; and as seldom do they appear among the proselytes of that meager refinement which arrogates the title of Philosophical Christianity.

From this simplicity, moreover, the Gospel derives advantages in consolation. Grief, whether in the learned or illiterate, is always simple. A man, bowed down under calamity, has no relish for investigation. His powers relax; he leans upon his comforter; his support must be without toil, or his spirit faints. Conformably to these reflections, we see, on the one hand, that the unlearned compose the bulk of Christians, the life of whose souls is the substantial doctrines of the cross—and on the other that in the time of affliction even the careless lend their ear to the voice of revelation. Precious at all times to believers, it is doubly precious in the hour of trial. These things prove, not only that the Gospel, when understood, gives a peculiar relief in trouble, but that it is readily apprehended, being most acceptable, when we are the least inclined to critical research.

Sixthly. The Gospel, so admirable for its simplicity, has also the recommendation of truth. The wretch who dreams of transport, feels a new sting in his wretchedness, when he opens his eyes and the delusion is fled. No real misery can be removed, nor any real benefit conferred, by doctrines which want the seal of certainty. And were the Gospel of Jesus a human invention, or were it checked by any rational suspicion that it may turn out to be a fable, it might retain its brilliancy, its sublimity, and even a portion of its interest, but the charm of its consolation would be gone. Nay, it would add gall to bitterness by fostering a hope which the next hour might laugh to scorn. But we may dismiss our anxiety, for there is no hazard of such an issue. Not only "grace," but "truth" came by Jesus Christ, "The gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth" were words of the "Amen, the faithful and true Witness;" and those which He has written in His blessed book, are "pure words, as silver tried in the furnace, purified seven times." His promises can no man deny to be "exceeding great;" yet they derive their value to us from assurances which, by satisfying the hardest conditions of evidence, render doubt not only inexcusable, but even criminal. "By two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Now, therefore, the promises of the Gospel which are "exceeding great," are also "precious." We need not scruple to trust ourselves for this life and the life to come, upon that Word which shall stand when "heaven and earth shall pass away." Oh, it is this which makes Christianity glad tidings to the depressed and perishing! No fear of disappointment! No hope that shall "make ashamed!" Under the feet of evangelical faith is a covenant-promise, and that promise is everlasting Rock. "I know," said one, whose testimony is corroborated by millions in both worlds, "I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.

Lastly. The Gospel, as a system of consolation is perfected by the authority and energy which accompany it. The devices of man originate in his fancy, and expire with his breath. Destitute of power, they play around depravity like shadows round the mountain top, and vanish without leaving an impression. Their effect would be inconsiderable could he manifest them to be true; because he can not compel the admission of truth itself into the human mind. Indifference, unreasonableness, prejudice, petulance, oppose to it an almost incredible resistance. We see this in the affairs of every day, and especially in the stronger conflicts of opinion and passion. Now, besides the opposition which moral truth has always to encounter, there is a particular reason why the truth of the Gospel, though most salutary, though attested by every thing within us and around us, by life and death, by earth, and heaven and hell, will not succeed unless backed by Divine energy. It is this. Sin has perverted the understanding of man, and poisoned his heart. It persuaded him first to throw away his blessedness, and then to hate it. The reign of this hatred, which the Scriptures call "enmity against God," is most absolute in every unrenewed man. It teaches him never to yield a point unfriendly to one corruption, without stipulating for an equivalent in favor of another. Now as the Gospel flatters none of his corruptions in any shape, it meets with deadly hostility from all his corruptions in every shape. It is to no purpose that you press upon him the "great salvation," that you demonstrate his errors and their corrective, his diseases and their cure. Demonstrate you may, but you convert him not. He will occasionally startle and listen, but it is only to relapse into his wonted supineness, and you shall as soon call up the dead from their dust, as awaken him to a sense of his danger, and prevail with him to embrace the salvation of God. "Where then," you will demand, "is the pre-eminence of your Gospel?" I answer, with the Apostle Paul, that "it is the power of God to salvation." When a sinner is to be converted, that is, when a slave is to be liberated from his chains, and a rebel from execution, that same voice which has spoken in the Scriptures, speaks by them to his heart, and commands an audience. He finds the word of God to be "quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword." It sets him before the bar of Justice, strips him of his self-importance, "sweeps away his refuge of lies!" and shows him that death which is "the wages of sin." It then conducts him, all trembling, to the Divine forgiveness, reveals Christ Jesus in his soul as his righteousness, his peace, his hope of glory. Amazing transition! But is not the cause equal to the effect? "Hath not the potter power over the clay?" Shall God draw, and the lame not run? Shall God speak, and the deaf not hear? Shall God breathe, and the slain not live? Shall God "lift up the light of His countenance" upon sinners reconciled in His dear Son, and they not be happy? Glory to His name! These are no fictions. "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen. The record, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart," is possessed by thousands who have "turned from the power of Satan unto God," and will certify that the revolution was accomplished by His word. And if it perform such prodigies on corruption and death, what shall it not perform in directing, establishing, and consoling them who have already obtained a "good hope through grace?" He who thunders in the curse speaks peace in the promise, and none can conceive its influence but they who have witnessed it. For proofs you must not go to the statesman, the traveler, or the historian. You must not go to the gay profession, or the splendid ceremonial. You must go the chamber of unostentatious piety. You must go to the family anecdote, to the Christian tradition, to the observation of faithful ministers. Of the last there are many who, with literal truth, might address you as follows: "I *have seen* this Gospel hush into a calm the tempest raised in the bosom by conscious guilt. I *have seen* it melt down the most obdurate into tenderness and contrition. I *have seen* it cheer up the broken-hearted, and bring the tear of gladness into eyes swollen with grief. I *have seen* it produce and maintain serenity under evils which drive the worldling mad. I *have seen* it reconcile the sufferer to his cross, and send the song of praise from lips quivering with agony. I *have seen* it enable the most affectionate relatives to part in death, not without emotion, but without repining, and with a cordial surrender of all that they held most dear, to the disposal of their heavenly Father. I *have seen* the fading eye brighten at the promise of Jesus. 'Where I am, there shall my servant be also.' I *have seen* the faithful spirit released from its clay, now mildly, now triumphantly, to enter into the joy of its Lord."

Who, among the children of men, that doubts this representation, would not wish it to be correct? Who, that thinks it only probable, will not welcome the doctrine on which it is founded, as worthy of all acceptation? And who that knows it to be true, will not set his seal to that doctrine as being, most emphatically, "Gospel preached to the poor?"

In applying to practical purposes, the account which has now been given of the Christian religion, I remark,

1. That it fixes a criterion of Christian ministrations.

If He, who "spake as never man spake," has declared His own doctrine to abound with consolation to the miserable, then, certainly, the instructions of others are evangelical, only in proportion as they subserve the same gracious end. A contradiction, not unfrequent among some advocates of revelation, is to urge against the infidel its power of comfort, and yet to avoid, in their own discourses, almost every principle from which that power is drawn. Disregarding the mass of mankind, to whom the Gospel is peculiarly fitted; and omitting those truths which might revive the grieved spirit, or touch the slumbering conscience, they discuss their moral topics in a manner unintelligible to the illiterate, uninteresting to the mourner, and without alarm to the profane. This is not "preaching Christ." Elegant dissertations upon virtue and vice, upon the evidences of revelation, or any other general subject, may entertain the prosperous and the gay; but they will not "mortify our members which are upon the earth;" they will not unsting calamity, nor feed the heart with an imperishable hope. When I go to the house of God, I do not want amusement. I want "the doctrine which is according to godliness." I want to hear of the remedy against the harassings of my guilt, and the disorder of my affections. I want to be led from weariness and disappointment, to that "goodness which filleth the hungry soul." I want to have light upon the mystery of providence; to be taught how the "judgments of the Lord are right;" how I shall be prepared for duty and for trial—how I may "pass the time of my sojourning here in fear," and close it in peace. Tell me of that Lord Jesus, "who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree." Tell me of His "intercession for the transgressors" as their "advocate with the Father." Tell me of His Holy Spirit, whom "they that believe on Him receive," to be their preserver, sanctifier, comforter. Tell me of His chastenings; their necessity, and their use. Tell me of His presence, and sympathy, and love. Tell me of the virtues, as growing out of His cross, and nurtured by His grace. Tell me of the glory reflected on His name by the obedience of faith. Tell me of vanquished death, of the purified grave, of a blessed resurrection, of the life everlasting—and my bosom warms. This is Gospel; these are glad tidings to me as a sufferer, because glad to me as a sinner. They rectify my mistakes; allay my resentments; rebuke my discontent; support me under the weight of moral and natural evil. These attract the poor; steal upon the thoughtless; awe the irreverent; and throw over the service of the sanctuary a majesty, which some fashionable modes of address never fail to dissipate. Where they are habitually neglected, or lightly referred to, there may be much grandeur, but there is no Gospel; and those preachers have infinite reason to tremble, who though admired by the great, and caressed by the vain, are deserted by the poor, the sorrowful, and such as "walk humbly with their God."

2. We should learn from the Gospel, lessons of active benevolence.

The Lord Jesus, who "went about doing good, has left us an example that we should follow His steps." Christians, on whom He has bestowed affluence, rank, or talent, should be the last to disdain their fellow-men, or to look with indifference on indigence and grief. Pride, unseemly in all, is detestable in them, who confess that "by grace they are saved." Their Lord and Redeemer, who humbled Himself by assuming their nature, came to "deliver the needy, when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper." And surely an object, which was not unworthy of the Son of God, can not be unworthy of any who are called by His name. Their wealth and opportunities, their talents and time, are not their own, nor to be used according to their own pleasure; but to be consecrated by their vocation "as fellow-workers with God." How many hands that hang down would be lifted up; how many feeble knees confirmed; how many tears wiped away; how many victims of despondency and infamy rescued by a close imitation of Jesus Christ. Go, with your opulence to the house of famine, and the retreats of disease. Go, "deal thy bread to the hungry; when thou seest the naked, cover him; and hide not thyself from thine own flesh." Go, and furnish means to rear the offspring of the poor; that they may at least have access to the word of your God. Go, and quicken the flight of the angel, who has "the everlasting Gospel to preach" unto the nations. If you possess not wealth, employ your station in promoting "good-will toward men. Judge the fatherless; plead for the widow." Stimulate the exertions of others, who may supply what is lacking on your part. Let the "beauties of holiness" pour their luster upon your distinctions, and recommend to the unhappy that peace, which yourselves have found in the salvation of God. If you have neither riches nor rank, devote your talents. Ravishing are the accents, which dwell on the "tongue of the learned," when it "speaks a word in season to him that is weary." Press your genius and your eloquence into the service of the "Lord your righteousness," to magnify His word, and display the riches of His grace. Who knoweth, whether He may honor you to be the minister of joy to the disconsolate, of liberty to the captive, of life to the dead? If He has denied you wealth, and rank, and talent, consecrate your heart. Let it dissolve in sympathy. There is nothing to hinder your "rejoicing with them that do rejoice, and your weeping with them that weep;" nor to forbid the interchange of kind and soothing offices. "A brother is born for adversity;" and not only should Christian be to Christian "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother," but he should exemplify the loveliness of his religion to "them that are without." An action, a word, marked by the sweetness of the Gospel, has often been owned of God for producing the happiest effects. Let no man, therefore, try to excuse his inaction; for no man is too inconsiderable to augment the triumphs of the Gospel, by assisting in the consolation which it yields to the miserable.

3. Let all classes of the unhappy repair to the Christian truth, and "draw water with joy out of its wells of salvation!" Assume your own characters, O ye children of men; present your grievances, and accept the consolation which the Gospel tenders. Come, now, ye tribes of pleasure, who have exhausted your strength in pursuing phantoms that retire at your approach! The voice of the Son of God in the Gospel is, Wherefore "spend ye your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not; hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness!" Come, ye tribes of ambition, who burn for the applause of your fellow-worms. The voice of the Son of God to you is, "The friendship of this world is enmity with God;" but "if any serve Me, him will My Father honor." Come, ye avaricious, who "pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor." The voice of the Son of God is, Wisdom is "more precious than rubies; and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her"—but "what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Come, ye profane! The voice of the Son of God is, "Hearken unto Me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness; behold, I bring near My righteousness." Come, ye formal and self-sufficient, who say "that ye are rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." The voice of the Son of God is, "I counsel you to buy of Me gold tried in the fire that ye may be rich; and white raiment that ye may be clothed; and that the shame of your nakedness do not appear; and anoint your eyes with eye-salve, that ye may see." Come, ye, who, being convinced of sin, fear lest the "fierce anger of the Lord fall upon you." The voice of the Son of God is, "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Come, ye disconsolate, whose souls are sad, because the Comforter is away. The voice of the Son of God is, The Lord "hath sent Me to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Come, ye tempted, who are borne down with the violence of the "law in your

members, and of assaults from the evil one. The voice of the Son of God is, "I will be merciful to your unrighteousness; and the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Come, ye children of domestic woe, upon whom the Lord has made a breach, by taking away your counselors and support. The voice of the Son of God is, "Leave thy fatherless children with Me; I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in Me." Come, ye from whom mysterious providence has swept away the acquisitions of long and reputable industry. The voice of the Son of God is, "My son, if thou wilt receive My words, thou shalt have "a treasure in the heavens that faileth not;" and mayest "take joyfully the spoiling of thy goods, knowing that thou hast in heaven a better and an enduring substance." Come, ye poor, who without property to lose, are grappling with distress, and exposed to want. The Son of God, though the heir of all things, "had not where to lay His head;" and His voice to His poor is, "Be content with such things as ye have, for I will never leave thee nor forsake thee; thy bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure." Come, ye reproached, who find "cruel mockings" a most bitter persecution. The voice of the Son of God is, "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of God and of glory resteth upon you. Come, in fine, ye dejected, whom the fear of death holds in bondage. The voice of the Son of God is, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them. O death, I will be thy plagues! O grave, I will be thy destruction! repentance shall be hid from Mine eye;" blessed Jesus! thy loving-kindness shall "be My joy in the house of My pilgrimage;" and I will praise thee "while I have any being," for that Gospel which thou hast preached to the poor!

DISCOURSE SEVENTY-FIFTH.

WILLIAM STAUGHTON, D.D.

Dr. Staughton was born in England, at Coventry, in Warwickshire, in the year 1770—the same year in which Drs. Griffin and Mason were born. At the early age of twelve years he discovered remarkable talents, and composed several poems, which were published and admired. At the age of seventeen he wrote a book called "Juvenile Poems." His literary studies were pursued at Bristol; and in that place he began occasionally to preach, and drew together large assemblies. He came to this country in 1793, at the request of his brethren in England, upon a call from Dr. Furman, of South Carolina, for a young man of promise to take charge of the Baptist church in Georgetown in that State. His first ministerial connection, of about seventeen months, was with the above-named church. Thence he removed to New York; but, falling sick with the yellow fever, and being otherwise afflicted, he chose a residence in New Jersey, and settled first with the church at Bordentown, and then with that at Burlington. While residing at the latter place, such was his reputation for brilliancy of talent, that Princeton College conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity, though then only twenty-eight years of age. In 1806 he removed to Philadelphia—the scene of his greatest labors and success—and assumed the charge of the first Baptist church. There his ministry was blessed with the outpouring of the Spirit, and during this pastorate, of five years, he received about three hundred by baptism. In 1811 he became pastor of the Sansom-street church, formed that year, and upon the erection of their spacious house of worship, it was crowded with an admiring audience. In 1817 Dr. Staughton was chosen President of Columbian College, Georgetown, D. C.; which office he filled for more than ten years. Upon the formation of the literary and Theological Institution in that city, he accepted the appointment to its presidency; but, setting out for that place from Philadelphia, he was taken sick upon the way, and died in Washington, Dec. 12, 1829.

Dr. Staughton possessed a mind of remarkable vigor and activity, and a heart full of zeal and noble purposes for the cause of the Redeemer. Few men ever enjoyed a wider popularity, and more heartily consecrated it to the best of objects. He excelled as an educator, and is said to have been almost unrivaled in pulpit eloquence. It is to be regretted that so few of his thrilling utterances—generally unwritten—have been preserved. We have met with only three of his printed productions; one, an address delivered at the opening of Columbian College, and two sermons; that here given being superior to the other. It was delivered at the dedication of the house of worship of the Hightstown Baptist church, N. J., Nov. 26, 1803. A few passages, chiefly of a local interest, are omitted. The discourse is worthy of the preacher's reputation; abounding as it does in bold and striking conceptions, expressed with the various essentials of true Christian eloquence.

GOD DWELLING AMONG MEN.

"But will God indeed dwell on the earth?"—1 KINGS, viii. 27.

It is the duty of reasonable creatures to worship the everlasting God. His majesty claims our adoration, and His mercy our gratitude. Nature herself, feeble as is her capacity for discovering and leading men along the paths of moral duty, has, nevertheless, in all ages, pointed the barbarian to the Supreme Power, from whom all good is derived, and on the guidance of whose providence all revolutions depend. "Pass over the earth," said Plutarch, "you may discover cities without walls, without literature, without monarchs, without palaces or wealth, where the theater and the school are not known; but no man ever saw a city without temples and gods, where prayers, and oaths, and oracles, and sacrifices were not used for obtaining good or averting evil."

This duty is more clearly taught, and enforced with still stronger motives, in the volume of Revelation. Almost every page instructs us to worship the Lord our God, and to serve Him only. We have examples rising in succession for our imitation. The mode of worship may vary, but the devotional principle must be the same.

As the necessities we feel and the blessings we enjoy, for the most part, respect us not merely as individuals, but as members of a large community, with solitary worship man is not to satisfy himself. The blasting and the mildew, the sword and the pestilence, the locust and the famine, are not private calamities. National victory over unjust opposition, peace in all our borders, fruitful showers and golden harvests, are not private blessings. Thousands feel the pang or divide the transport. Hence we find that men have not separately each one prepared a victim for himself; they have agreed in bands to surround a common altar, and to join in mourning and supplication, or in hymns of thanksgiving and praise. Sometimes a family composed a company of worshipers, and sometimes a city; but in the history of the Israelites we behold a whole nation uniting in holy solemnities. Though, on their leaving Egypt, the people were more than a million in number, they had but one tabernacle, one ark, one mercy-seat, one altar for burnt-offering, and one high priest.

The tabernacle first used among the Hebrews appears to have been reared in haste by Moses. Perhaps it was nothing more than one of his own tents. It came to pass, nevertheless, that "every one who sought the Lord went out" to this tent, probably for the space of a year. Hence Moses fitly called it "the tabernacle of the congregation."

Afterward the larger tabernacle, the workmanship of Bezaleel and Aholiab, was set up. To this the tribes repaired, not only while sojourners in the desert, but after their settlement in the land of promise.

At length King David conceived the design of building a house for the Lord. He had already testified his love for the worship of Jehovah, by having a new tabernacle raised near his own palace, for the reception of the ark on its removal from the house of Obed-edom. But this was not sufficient. "See now," said the king to Nathan, "I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth in curtains." "Go," said the prophet, "and do all that is in thy heart." The king was on the point of proceeding to the pleasing task, when he learned that though the Lord approved his purpose, the work should be reserved for Solomon, his son. Soon after the pious monarch had fallen asleep with his fathers, the young prince "built the house and finished it."

"Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes," that they might bring the ark from Zion to the temple. The men of Israel gathered themselves together in crowds to join the solemnity. When the priests began to remove the ark, the tabernacle and all the holy vessels, King Solomon and all the congregation led on the procession, sacrificing, as they went, "sheep and oxen that could not be told or numbered for multitude." As soon as the ark was brought into the oracle of the house, a dark cloud filled all the place. The people were struck with horror, and the terrified priests could not stand to minister. Then spake Solomon, relieving their apprehensions and commencing his prayer: "The Lord said He would dwell in thick darkness." The king recounted with solemn reverence the promises that God had made and fulfilled for his father David and for himself; but, as he prayed, his devotions were suddenly checked, or rather, sublimely elevated by an overpowering sense of the Divine Majesty. "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens can not contain Thee; how much less this house that I have builded!"

You, brethren, have been raising this house and setting it in order. To-day we open it by beginning to offer up the incense of prayer before the throne. To day, for the first time, from this pulpit salvation through the blood of the Lamb is proclaimed—the doors have begun to be crowded with worshipers, and the walls to ring with hymns of thanksgiving. O that to-day, in this place, sinners may be converted to God and saints receive consolation and establishment. Great God of assemblies! bend thy heavens and come down; here make the horn of David to bud, and ordain a lamp for thine anointed!—"But will God indeed dwell on the earth?"

We adopt for ourselves the exclamation of Solomon. Every word is full of meaning. We scarce know where to rest our emphasis. Will *God* dwell on the earth! It would create our wonder if a cherub were to display his burning glories among us, but this were nothing; it were nothing if all the cherubim that wheel round the throne of light, were to come from the skies, compared with the descent of the eternal God. For God to dwell in heaven does not so much excite our astonishment. It is true in a certain sense the angels are chargeable with folly, and the heavens are unclean in His sight; there are, however, there, none dwelling in houses of clay, no "filthy and abominable" beings who drink "iniquity like water." But that He should dwell on the *earth*, seems almost beyond belief. Will He *indeed* dwell, or shall it be only in a sense improper and figurative! Will he *indeed* dwell, or is the mercy too great to be expected! Divine condescensions often fill the hearts of good men with holy astonishment. Thus the compassion and sovereignty of Christ in manifesting Himself to His disciples and not to the world, appeared marvelous. Lord, how is it? When Israel was delivered from captivity, when a risen Saviour was announced to His disciples, they were like men that dream, they believed not for joy.

The devout surprise which our text expresses, leaves it implied, that it would be no ground of wonder if God would not make His abode with us. This idea will receive confirmation on our contemplating the *immensity*, the *loftiness*, the *independence*, the *holiness*, and the *sovereignty* of God.

Solomon at the dedication seems particularly to have been struck with a sense of the Divine *immensity*. Behold, the heavens and the heaven of heavens can not contain Thee, how much less this house that I have builded! God had promised to make the temple His dwelling-place; but here was the wonder, that He who fills the universe (and who for this reason is by the Jews called Makom or space) should choose a frail building as His rest forever. The martyr Stephen exhibits this idea, in his excellent defense, in a strong point of view. "Solomon built Him a house. Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, heaven is My throne and earth is My footstool: what house will ye build Me, saith the Lord: or what is the place of My rest? Hath not My hand made all these things?" Solomon felt a pleasure, perhaps a pride, that so magnificient a temple was completed; but how little does the whole appear to him when standing in the presence of Jehovah! What was the house he had built, when all the heavens are but a throne for God, and all the earth merely a footstool! Having done all, we are still uprofitable servants.

It is wonderful that God should dwell with man, because of His *loftiness*. From the smallest particle of animated matter up to the first archangel in glory, there appears, through all the order of beings a gradation. But the Lord is above all, He is the High God; or, as He is often called, the Most High, exalted above all blessing and praise. Will infinite elevation dwell with abject worms? the inhabitant of eternity with the creatures of yesterday? Many a philosopher of both ancient and modern classes has declared He will not, and many a sinner has caught the sentiment, and used it for his own destruction, "The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it."

When we meditate on the *independence* of Jehovah, it must appear wonderful that He will make His abode with us. Our happiness is connected with society, and, together with our being, is hourly dependent on God. He is happy alone and from Himself. He possessed infinite blessedness before the worlds were framed, and should earth and seas, should suns and stars, should mortals and seraphim be struck out of existence, He would remain the "blessed God." The vicissitudes of creation no more affect His happiness, than a passing cloud below disturbs the course of the great sun through the heavens. He is not to be worshiped with men's hands, as though "He needed any thing." "Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous, or is it gain to Him that thou makest thy way perfect? Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit the son of man, but can man be profitable to God?" The guilt of impious men can no more shake the Divine throne, than the purity of saints can establish it. He possesses none of those motives to seek society, arising from want, interest, and gratification, which operate with us. He inhabits His own eternity!

That God should dwell on the earth appears the more surprising when we contemplate His *holiness.* In this perfection He is greatly glorious. He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity without abhorrence. Into heaven, the habitation of His holiness, there shall in no wise enter any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie. One of the solemn anthems of heaven is holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty. But what are we, what the whole human race? Conceived, alas, in sin, and shapen in iniquity, we have gone astray from the womb. David drew the likeness of man in his day; Paul, struck with its correctness, again exhibited it; and a momentary comparison of features will convince us that it resembles man in the present age, as much as it could have done in ages past. Jews and Gentiles are "all under sin: as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes."

Review these sad outlines. They teach us that the powers of the mind are depraved; there is none that understandeth, the path of duty is abandoned; they are all gone out of the way, the excellences of Jehovah have no attractions, there is none that seeketh after God; the members of the body are instruments of unrighteousness; the insatiate desires of the drunkard and the glutton testify that their throat is an open sepulcher; the perjured person and the liar are with their tongues using deceit, and the poison of asps is under the lips of the flatterer and the slanderer. What multitudes are there among all ranks of society who are using language at which a demon might shudder. With how little emotion is damnation invoked on their eyes and their limbs, their bodies and their souls. The mouth of many seems so full of cursing, that they can scarcely speak on the most trivial occurrences without an oath incorporated with every sentence. The feet of men, in all ages have been swift to shed blood. The first child that was born into the world was a murderer; and almost every page of history, when it does not lead us into the ensanguined field, consists of inferences from battles fought, or preludes to some new catastrophe. Thousands are destroyers of men by profession, and so swift, so prompt to shed blood are heroes and nations, that circumstances the most insignificant are commonly laid hold of, and amplified into grounds of dissension and slaughter. Whatever difference may subsist among men as to the degree of their iniquity, there is none righteous, no, not one. And will God indeed *dwell upon the earth?* It were reasonable to conclude He will not, or that if He should, having whet His glittering sword, His hand would take hold on judgment and render recompense.

But, further, reflect, brethren, a moment on the Divine *sovereignty.* The moral law is binding alike on angels and men. Many of the former class of beings, and, as we have just shown, all of the latter, have violated its precepts. It is a righteous thing with God to render tribulation and anguish to the transgressor. Having uttered the threatening, either on the sinner, or on a substitute, the penalty must descend, or the Divine faithfulness must fail. The angels which kept not their first estate He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. Since, like them we have sinned, what reason can we assign why, with them, we should not suffer? It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed at the present hour. If it be right that God attach a penalty to His law, it can not be wrong that He exact it. His character as Governor of the universe demands the measure, and who can say whether His wisdom will contrive, His arm accomplish, or His sovereignty accept a plan for the deliverance of His rebellious creatures.

Great, however, as are the difficulties which arise in the mind when we associate the ideas of God's immensity and our locality; His loftiness and our meanness; His independence and our subjection; His holiness and our defilement; His sovereignty and our deserts; be astonished, O earth! break forth into singing, ye mountains—the Holy Word gives an affirmative answer to the inquiry in the text.

We wish not to derive our illustrations of this truth merely from the operations of providence. When we behold Him walking on the wings of the wind, or planting His footsteps in the mighty waters; when He shakes down towers with His earthquakes; when He utters His voice in thunder, or loads the air with pestilence;

when He touches the hills and they smoke, becoming sudden volcanoes, or when we see Him clothing the lilies of the field, and feeding the fowls of the air, we possess proofs that He is not far from every one of us; but, the condescension to which our text refers, relates immediately to the operations of His grace, such particularly as are exhibited,

I. In the coming of Christ into the world;

II. In the residence of His Spirit in the heart; and,

III. In the presence of God in His churches.

I. We have ample evidence that God will dwell with man *in the coming of Christ into the world.* "The word was made flesh," said John, "and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." We can not assent to the creed of such as regard our Lord Jesus as a mere man, or to that of those who consider Him only a created being, while they admit He is above the highest angels. If Jesus Christ be not the true God and eternal life, would the Holy Spirit have inspired the writers of the Bible to have recorded as many and such pertinent texts, which a plain understanding must accept as demonstrations of His divinity, and which require all the subtility of criticism to induce a doubt as to their meaning? We are reduced to the alternative to acknowledge, either that Christ is a divine person, or that the language of Scripture is unguarded and deceptive; an idea which every good man will reject with abhorrence. God was manifest in the flesh; for Christ is God. His name is Immanuel, God with us.

Of His dignity and of His presence the heavens gave testimony. A new star traversed the sky at His incarnation, and at His crucifixion for three hours the sun was extinguished. The winds and seas gave testimony, when at His word the furious blasts were hushed, and the rough surges smoothed into a great calm; at the same word the inhabitants of the waters crowded round the ship and filled the net of the astonished and worshiping disciples. The earth gave testimony: at His death and at His resurrection it trembled to its center. Diseases gave testimony: fevers were rebuked; issues of blood were stanched; the blind saw their deliverer; the deaf heard His voice; the dumb published His character; paralytics arose and followed Him, and lepers, at His command, hastened to the priests and were healed as they traveled. The grave gave testimony, when Lazarus came forth in the garb of its dominions, and when many of the bodies of the saints that slept arose. The invisible world gave testimony: devils acknowledged His divinity, and flew from His presence to the abodes of perdition; angels ministered unto Him in the desert, the garden, and the tomb. One of them, as if to exhibit an emblem of the virtues of the Saviour, often descended into Bethesda and imparted to the waters a healing power. A multitude sang an anthem in the air in the hearing of the shepherds, and as our risen Lord ascended up to glory, they accompanied His flight with the sound of trumpet and the shouts of triumph.

But, Oh! my brethren, how glorious the purposes He came to execute. "To finish transgression, to make an end of sin, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy:"

II. God is found dwelling on the earth *by His Spirit in the heart.* The Holy Spirit, the third person in the mysterious Trinity, is no less properly God than the Father or the Son. His names, His attributes, and His works prove His divinity. God gave this promise to the Hebrews, "I will set My tabernacle among you, and I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be My people." The apostle guides our eye to its accomplishment, where he says, "We are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them." Paul had conveyed the same idea in a prior epistle to the Corinthian Church. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you; the temple of God is holy, which temple are ye." The heart of man, by nature, is a fortress of Satan, a den of thieves, deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. In regeneration, when the Holy Spirit makes His entry, the strong man armed is driven from the seat he has usurped, and a war commences between corrupt affections and the holy nature which the new birth produces. Possessed of the soul, the Spirit proceeds to work in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure. He teaches us the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and influences to deep repentance, holy caution and habitual mortification. He teaches us our need of salvation, and then takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us. The soul is filled with unutterable transport, surprise and gratitude, on finding itself at the margin of a fountain open for sin and for uncleanness. The same spirit helps our infirmities, promotes our conformity to Christ, enables us to cry, Abba, Father, seals us to the day of redemption and becomes Himself the earnest of a heavenly inheritance. The stay of our Lord Jesus on this earth was short. When a little more than thirty years were expired, He led out His disciples as far as Bethany and while blessing them, He was parted from them and carried up into heaven; but the Comforter is to abide with the saints forever. He shall ascend not *before* them, but *with* them to glory.

Think it not strange that God the Spirit should possess a distinct habitation in the heart of every believer. The same voice, like the voice of God from Mount Sinai, may distinctly enter a million of ears. Place before the sun as many mirrors as the earth could furnish, an image of the sun would appear in every mirror; but, supposing no illustration could be derived from nature, experience demonstrates the truth. To this test the apostle refers, where he says, "Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be, the Spirit of God dwell in you; now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His; and if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."

III. We have evidence that God will dwell with men upon the earth, *in the display of His gracious presence in His Churches.* He said to Israel, "In all places where I record My name, I will come unto thee and I will bless thee," and in language very similar our Lord addressed His disciples: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them. I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you."

David declares he has beheld the glory of Jehovah in his tabernacle, and may I not add, so have we. Have we not seen it in the ministers of the sanctuary, when engaged in solemn prayer? How like Moses have they ascended the hill of the Lord, in presence of all the people! What a holy flow of adoration, petitions, and thanksgivings have we sometimes witnessed? Have we not seen it in the ministration of the word? With what boldness and readiness of mind, with what depth of argument and persuasive energy, with what ardent zeal and heavenly unction, have we often heard His servants deliver their message! The sound of their Master's feet behind them, while it revives the sense of their awful responsibility, gives courage to the heart, and inspires that eloquence in proclaiming the terrors of Sinai and the consolations of Calvary, which the schools could never have taught. The effects attending the word bespeak the presence of the Lord. It is God that giveth the increase. "If there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced, he is judged, and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest, and so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth." The cry of converts when seeking access to the Church and its ordinances is, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you. We have indications of His presence when Asaphs are instructed in the rectitude of providence, when Ephraims are mourning over their backslidings, and when Simeons, having seen the salvation of God, are longing to depart in peace, from earth to heaven.

God will *dwell in* His churches—He hath said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." The Church, it is true, is in the wilderness, and a thousand savage beasts of prey stand waiting to devour; but the Lord is a wall of fire around her, through which they can not pass. Zion is His rest forever. The malice of earth and hell can no more succeed in destroying the Church, His dwelling-place below, than in demolishing the heavens, His dwelling-place above; and for this obvious reason, "The Lord is there."

There are objects in the natural world whose presence brings blessings with them. Whenever the broad river winds its course, its banks become fertile and its contiguous cities, seats of commerce. The appearance of the sun cheers the face of nature, and the possession of a shield is a security to the warrior against the weapons of his adversaries. Under such animating figures, David sets forth the advantages of the Divine presence in His churches. "There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of our God. The Lord God is a sun and shield, the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." His presence is like that of the good shepherd in the midst of his flock, or of the affectionate father in the midst of his happy family.

Does it, my brethren, from what you have heard, appear a truth that God WILL dwell with man upon the earth, permit me to exhort you never to lose sight of this astonishing condescension. Not less in the stoops of His mercy, than in the sublimities of His nature, does Jehovah shine without a rival. Historians have dwelt on the resignation of Charles V., the emperor of Germany, as an event scarcely paralleled in the annals of ages. That a prince whose ruling passion had been uniformly the love of power, at the age of fifty-six, when objects of ambition operate with full force on the mind, who during half a century had alarmed and agitated Europe, filling every kingdom in it, by turns, with the terror of his arms, and who was then in possession of all the honors which can flatter the heart of man, should suddenly abandon his throne, pass into the shades of an obscure retirement, and there dwell among a few servants, was every where a matter of wonder and surprise. But, compared with the Lord's bowing the heavens, this is less than nothing.

"In vain might lofty princes try
Such condescension to perform;
For worms were never raised so high
Above their meanest fellow worm!"

* * * * *

Raise, too, your contemplations, this morning, to that state of perfect blessedness which is before you. In their nature and in their source, the joys of saints in heaven and saints on earth are the same; but, in numerous circumstances they widely differ. When we meet in His sanctuary now, the assembly is mixed. He that feareth God and he that feareth Him not, sit and hear, and sing together; but in the mansions above, the people will be all holy. Here, in their happiest moments, the saints find a sinful nature defiling their purest services; so that, the brighter their discoveries of the Divine glory, like Isaiah and Job, the more they deplore their uncleanness and abhor themselves. But then, not the least taint of moral defilement shall remain; their hearts, as well as their garments, shall be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. In our present worship, we assemble only with a *few* of God's people. Though the iron rod of persecution does not scatter us as it did our forefathers, and limit our devotions to the private parlor or the prison-house, yet the *conveniences* of our habitations and the requirements of animal life, render the congregations of the saints but little flocks. *Eras* keep us asunder, we can not walk with God in company with Enoch; nor join with David in procession to the tabernacle: we can not unite with the apostles in their prayers in the upper room in Jerusalem, or accompany the strains of the martyrs who sung their hosannas as they embraced the stake. *Place* divides us from each other. We know that Divine worship is paid to the Lord by thousands in Europe, and that Asia and Africa are laying their tribute at His feet; but, long intervening tracts of land and sea forbid our uniting with their assemblies. Variety of religious *sentiment*, too, gives rise to different congregations: for, as yet we see through a glass darkly, and know only in part, and prophecy only in part. But in heaven, the assembly shall consist of multitudes that no man can number. All that have loved the Saviour shall form one glorious band. There an Abraham and an Owen, a Watts and a David, a Pearce and a John, a Daniel and a Henry—there the Hindoo and the American, the European and the Negro, the Hottentot and the Greenlander—there the Methodist and Episcopalian, the Presbyterian and the Baptist shall, with hearts and with voices forever united, sing, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!*

DISCOURSE SEVENTY-SIXTH.

GREGORY T. BEDELL, D.D.

This eloquent Episcopal divine was born on Staten Island, the 28th of October, 1793. He received his early academic education at Cheshire, in Connecticut, and graduated at Columbia College, New York city. In 1811 he commenced his preparation for holy orders, under the direction of Dr. How, one of the assistant ministers of Trinity Church, N. Y., and was ordained deacon by Bishop Hobart, in November, 1814.

His first pastoral charge was at Hudson, on the North River, where he settled in 1815, and where his popularity as a preacher was very great. In 1818 he was instituted as the rector of the Episcopal church in Fayetteville, N. C., at which place his ministry was distinguished for its evangelical character and for its successful results. Three years and a half from his settlement here, he was compelled to remove, from ill health; when he visited Philadelphia, and became rector of St. Andrew's church, which position he filled with eminent success till the time of his death, in August, 1834. His memoir has been written by the Rev. Dr. Tyng.

As a preacher, Dr. Bedell was highly evangelical, habitually dwelling upon the great truths of redemption through the Lord Jesus Christ. He was remarkable for the simplicity of his style and manner, and for the beauty of his oratory. By those best qualified to judge, he was pronounced a model of chaste, dignified, impressive elocution. He was often earnest and solemn, and held such a command over his large audiences as to cause a breathless silence, and enchain the attention of even the most careless and indifferent. Comparatively few of Dr. Bedell's sermons were written out in full. Only some thirty have been given to the public. That here given is the last of a series on the same text, and a single allusion to the preceding discourse is left out. The discourse has several passages of great beauty and force of expression.

THE SUBLIME ISSUE OF THE WORK OF RELIGION.

"And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I can not come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?" —Nehemiah, vi. 3.

The end of our faith, says the apostle, is the salvation of the soul. And the end, or issue of the great work of personal religion, which is the production of faith, is precisely the same—the everlasting felicity of heaven.

It is the issue of a work which decides its relative importance, even in all earthly things. That is a work of nobler conception, and of more splendid achievement, which issues in some grand benefit to the human family, than that which issues in the establishment of an individual's prosperity or honor. Robert Raikes was a greater man than Alexander or Napoleon; and the Sunday-school system, which has been reared on the foundation which, in the providence of God, Raikes was permitted to lay, is a work which far outweighs in grandeur all the achievements at which Alexander or Napoleon ever labored. And thus, what they were desirous of accomplishing for themselves, and have failed in the attempt, he has, under God, accomplished for himself.

I have stated that the issue of the work of religion is the eternal blessedness of heaven, and this constitutes the greatness of the work. In the present discourse, my purpose is to show this from the intrinsic nature of the happiness of heaven. And yet, on the very threshold of this discussion, I am met with a difficulty which it would seem must, of necessity, embarrass, if not stay, my progress. How am I to give you any information as to the intrinsic character of the happiness of heaven? Is not this something beyond the conception of man? Are we told sufficiently about it in the Scriptures to authorize speculation? Is there any thing beyond a glimpse? I am aware that the apostle said, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." And I am aware that God, in His infinite wisdom, has not let us into the secret of those delights which make up the eternal felicity of the saints in light, in their inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. I am aware of all this, and it gives me a timely admonition to place a rein on my imagination, lest I darken counsel by words without knowledge. There appears to me no way to discuss the nature of the happiness of heaven, but to determine to go no further than the Scripture has gone; to stretch the raptured vision as far as the horizon which the revelation of God has established; contentedly to stop where Scripture stops, and to wait till the time when all else shall be revealed in the light of eternity itself.

In order that I may be reined in, and curbed, and kept within bounds, I purpose to place between myself and you, certain great outlines furnished by the Scriptures. We may probably get some idea of the subject from considering heaven in these three striking aspects; *First*, as to its society; *Secondly*, as to its business; and *Thirdly*, as to its enjoyments.

I shall probably be compelled to run the last two divisions into one, because the business of heaven is its happiness; between them there is, and can be, no correct distinction. Remember that I state the greatness of the work of religion from the reward into which it issues, the eternal happiness of heaven. What is the nature of its happiness? Judge ye.

I. From its *society*. Who are they? Who are to be the inhabitants of heaven?

I shall be considered, probably, as uttering but a very trite observation, when I say that man is a social being, that society forms the basis of his earthly happiness. Give a man the presence of the friends whom he loves, and, humanly speaking, he can be happy any where and every where. Siberia's snows or Africa's sands are no insuperable barrier to his enjoyment. But deprive him of society, and a palace of gold and luxuries untold will but aggravate a misery which nothing save social enjoyment can prevent. It was a most impressive idea of a poet, when he attempted to tell the feelings of the last man. He supposes one man left, when all the rest of human kind and of animal nature had been withered up. The poignancy of that man's feelings was not that he stood among the ruins of a world, but that he stood alone. And I can not imagine of happiness, even in heaven, apart from its society. But here the question comes back, What constitutes the society of heaven? There is a possibility of ascertaining this with the clearest demonstration. Let me set you upon a train of investigation which can not fail to lead you to an accurate and most infinitely important conclusion. Hear what our Saviour says, "Except a man be born again he can not see the kingdom of God." "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." Form the arguments made up in these quotations. Who are in heaven? Those who repent, and are converted, and believe the Gospel; the heart-changed disciples of the crucified yet risen Saviour. Now see if the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ bear their testimony to the same thing. "Who are these that are arrayed in white robes? and whence come they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." One portion of the society of heaven, therefore, is formed of what is called the Church triumphant. St. Paul tells us—"But ye are come to Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

What a glorious society! Innumerable company of angels, archangels, cherubim, seraphim! Thousands of thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. This is a part of the society. The spirits of just men made perfect; believers made perfect; their labors finished; their trials over; their race run; the goal reached; the prize obtained; the crown won; the general assembly and Church of the first-born.

What a glorious society! Saints who have served the Lord during every successive period of the world, from righteous Abel to the very last of those who, when the Lord shall come a second time, shall be caught up to meet Him in the air, and so to be ever with the Lord. There is a degree of melancholy grandeur in the idea of a heathen of old, who, amid all the darkness, and ignorance, and superstition in which he lived, could compose his mind to death in the supposition that, in the Elysian fields of his mythology, he should meet with Plato, and with Socrates, and with Homer, and with Hesiod, and a host of other illustrious worthies, and spend his eternity with them in a philosophy refined from the grossness of earth. Miserable comfort! his Elysian fields were fables, not even cunningly devised. "But we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;" and in those mansions of eternal glory are to be found the martyred Abel; that patriarch who walked with God, and was translated without tasting death; that father of the faithful, Abraham, with Isaac and Jacob, Moses, Joshua, prophets, priests, and kings, apostles, martyrs, and innumerable servants of the Lord less distinguished; thousands of thousands, gathered out of every tribe, and kindred, and people, and from every age and generation of the world.

It is well that there is an interposing vail to hide the fullness of this gloried society from our view; the sight, next to the vision of the Omnipotent and Eternal, would be too bright to look upon. And yet this society, this communion of saints, is thrown entirely into the shade, as we advance further and further, with the sacred Scriptures for our guide. Tax your imagination longer. Let me pass, ye prophets, ye apostles, ye martyrs! A greater than you all is yet to be discovered! That society is blessed with the peculiar presence of the great God Himself. It is there that His throne is fixed, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things have passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful." The eye shall behold the King in His beauty.

But there are circumstances which give a charm to the society of heaven, which is true of no other society—it is a united society. Every member of that society has the same sympathies, the same tastes, the same views, the same feelings; there are there no elements of discord. Love supreme to God is the common link which binds them all together. When the saints left the earth, they left all its dross and all its imperfections behind them, and because there is no sin there, there is nothing to mar the full and perfect felicity of those who inherit glory. Besides this, it is a society in the ranks of which there is no separations. Earthly society is made up, like every thing else which is earthly, of changes and vicissitudes. An almost infinite variety of changes produce, in the society of this world, continual separations. It is not so above. The saints admitted into glory are there forever. As no discord can interrupt their harmony, so no death can break in and diminish their numbers. But I may not dwell upon this theme so lovely. The work of religion is a great, a glorious work, because it trains, it disciplines, it educates the soul for this society, where all is harmony and love among the members, all is conformity to Him who sitteth on the throne.

I return to the question, What is the nature of the happiness of heaven? Judge it from its *business.*

I can not imagine any thing like happiness apart from some kind of business or employment. Idleness on earth is not only crime, but it is misery; and this is the reason why multitudes who, from a variety of circumstances, have the questionable privilege of being idle, plunge into vice and dissipation to escape the wretchedness of being entirely without employment. They have not the energy to do right, and to be useful to society, and therefore, following the bent of their dispositions, commit sin, and become the pests of society, merely to have something to busy themselves about. Upon the general propositions, that employment is essential to happiness, I would judge that even in heaven there must be, for the immortal spirit, engagements of the most active description; and yet so different in the very nature of the case, must all these engagements be from those which occupy our attention here below, that we can form no adequate conception of them. The contrast must of necessity be beyond all measurement. Here we are ceaselessly engaged in low and groveling occupations, some seeking to build their reputation and happiness upon the basis of some project of enlarged ambition; some toiling as if the very happiness of time and eternity combined depended upon it, seeking to heap up riches while they know not who shall gather or enjoy them; and some wasting their health and strength, and time, on sensual, transitory, fading, unsatisfying gratifications. Of all men's earthly pursuits self is the single end.

But the employments of heaven are upon a more enlarged and a more enlarging plan, suited to the state and capacity of the immortal soul. I confess to you, my friends, that it is extremely difficult to treat a subject of this kind, where there is such an infinite disproportion between the littleness of man's mind, and the grandeur of the theme on which he would feebly venture to expatiate. God, for purposes unquestionably wise and benevolent, has never seen fit to let us into the grand secret of what it is which peculiarly constitutes the bliss of the eternal world of glory. There are some few scattered intimations, just enough to stimulate and excite the spiritual appetite. There is an intimation, by no means obscure, that the grand employment of the saints in glory is to do the will of God with a perfection of obedience springing from the perfection of love. This intimation is to be found in the prayer of our blessed Master, when He teaches us to petition that the will of God may be done on earth as it is in done in heaven. We know that this is the employment of His angels now, and that which is suitable to the nature of created intelligences who have never sinned, can not be inappropriate to the nature of those who are raised to participation of their glory.

One thing with certainty we learn from the Scriptures, that much of the happiness of heaven will consist in the sacred employ of praise and thanksgiving. Prayer there will be none, because prayer is the soul's sincere desire, but there there will be no desire, for every desire shall have been completely satisfied. The beloved apostle of our Lord, from his prison of Patmos, was permitted to take one raptured glimpse of the employments which characterize and constitute the happiness of the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem, and it is the praise of God—" And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for Thou was slain and has redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and in the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever."

There is one idea connected with the employments of heaven, which, to my mind, is full of beauty and consolation; and it is founded on the nature of man as a social being. I do not desire to enter into any unauthorized speculations, and would be very cautious in stepping where there is no path evidently pointed out in the Scripture; and in this whole consideration, my effort has been to restrain myself, lest I should overstep the boundary which the subject itself ought to impose. So far as my own individual opinion is concerned, and that opinion is countenanced by some of the best and wisest of the servants of God, there are other employments in heaven besides those which are immediately to be resolved into praise and thanksgiving; employments which are strictly social in their nature. And under this impression, it appears to me, that connected with the worship of Almighty God, the blessed inhabitants of the celestial city will be engaged in the intercourse of that communion of saints which will fill up the interval, if any such there be, between the anthems of the solemn sanctuary. It ought not to be considered as a matter at all incredible, or in the least degree unreasonable, that the saints should then converse with one another on those great things which God has done for their souls.

What more raptured employment, and what more ravishing delight, than that the hosts of the redeemed, as they had been rescued from the bitter pains of everlasting death, should testify to one another, each perfect in sympathy, how much they were indebted to that matchless Saviour who humbled Himself and became obedient unto death for their sakes. What should hinder, that even in the mansions of never-ceasing felicity, they should let the memory rest for awhile on the grace they had long resisted, the dying love they had despised, the patience they had abused, the efforts they had scorned. All this retrospection, instead of producing unhappiness, would but magnify the grace of God. What should hinder, that, as they walk the golden streets, or recline under the shadow of the tree that bears twelve manner of fruits, or lave in the river that makes glad the city of God, they should tell to one another the marvelous loving-kindness of the Saviour; how He Himself subdued their unbelief, and by what processes, tender or severe, He let down into their souls the light of spiritual life? What hinders that they should animate each other, and stimulate each other in their ceaseless progression in holiness and happiness, by a growing acquaintance with the riches of the love which redeemed them; how He protected them, and comforted and sanctified them; guarded them from dangerous snares; kept them from the power of temptation; reclaimed them when wandering; snatched them from many a peril, and led them in His hand to glory? Then, kindling as the theme goes on, of what they were, and are, and still may be, they ever and anon shall cease the social communications, and render their pure and perfect praises to Him who is the author of all their happiness!

As I anticipated, I have mingled the enjoyments and the employments of heaven together. They can not be sundered. The happiness of heaven consists in its employments; all, all centering upon God, the only object of a supreme and unceasing regard. There are other emblems used in the Scriptures to express the glory and happiness of the redeemed, as in the closing chapters of the book of Revelation; but the language used is so highly figurative, that the only idea which can be gathered is, that the glory is beyond description, the happiness beyond conception.

The work of religion, truly commenced, and truly carried on, issues in the happiness which I have feebly attempted to describe. Tell me a greater work than that whose end is salvation—the happiness of heaven beyond description or conception—the happiness of heaven without alloy—the happiness of heaven without termination—the immediate society of that God in whose presence there is fullness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore—ceaseless progression in a knowledge which shall be capable of satisfying the immense desires of an immortal mind; ceaseless advancement from one state of glory to another, each perfect in its kind; ceaseless accumulations of happiness, flowing from all the resources of an infinite God!

My friends, when I think of the character of heaven, its society, its business, its enjoyments, I am at no loss to discover a very decided reason why the great work of personal religion, which issues in that happiness, is neglected and despised. There is no unconverted man who has the least wish for such a heaven as has been described; and who will be religious for an issue which is not desirable? I am perfectly willing to admit, my brethren, that there is even in the unconverted heart, a certain undefined desire after an unknown happiness beyond the grave, but it is not the kind of happiness which God has provided.

Tell me, ye worldlings, is there any thing in the felicity of heaven as the Scripture unfolds it to your view, which suits the taste and habit of your souls? Is there any thing in the society, the business or the enjoyments of the place which brings itself down to the level of your earthly desires and your groveling pursuits and pleasures? How strangely would the man of warlike ambition feel, were he ushered into a society where perfect peace and love sincere have their eternal and uninterrupted reign. How strangely would the man, who seeks the honor which cometh from his fellow, feel in that place, where it is among the highest glory of the redeemed to cast their crowns at the feet of Him who made them kings and priests unto God. How strangely would the man, ambitious of the honors of intellectual worth and scientific attainments feel, were he to enter among those whose highest glory is that they know the Lord as they are known of Him. In heaven, the merchant, who is absorbed in his business, would find no means of gain; and for the careless child of pleasure there would be, in heaven, no brilliant assemblies of the votaries of folly such as he loves, no soul-ruining theaters, no gaudy decorations of the person to minister to pride and vanity. There is nothing, absolutely nothing, in the Scripture representation of heavenly felicity, to make it in the least degree desirable to one solitary soul among you, who is yet in the slavery of the world, led captive by the devil at his will. Heaven would, indeed, be a sad, and sorrowful, and solitary place for every individual of an earthly taste and an unchanged heart. And ought I to expect you to engage in a work of religion for an issue which you can not possibly desire? What is heaven? It is essentially the conformity of the mind and heart to God! What is the work of religion? The process of that conformity beginning with a change of heart.

My dear friends, it is a most solemn and serious business to you, that in your state of unconcern and sin, you have no moral fitness for the enjoyment of God's glorious presence. Small would be the consequence of this, if this earth were destined to be the whole theater of your display. But you are born for immortality. An undying spirit occupies the tabernacle of clay which is destined to perish, the food of corruption and the worm. In a very short period, every eye in this assembly shall be closed in death; the busy must leave his business, the worldly his pleasure, the gay his gayety, and the thoughtless his unconcern. I do confess to you, my brethren, that it fills my soul with melancholy beyond expression, to think that of those by whom I am now surrounded, the great majority are living only for time and sense, while they neglect eternity; and that while doing this, you are standing on the narrow isthmus, which, but for a moment, divides the two. In a few short years, not an individual now here, will be seen in these pews. They will be occupied by another generation. But where will you be, when another generation has taken your places in the house of God? Where will you be? In the heaven which I have described as the issue of the work of religion, or in that dreadful hell which awaits the neglecters and despisers of a Saviour's mercy. This is the record of God! The time is coming, when the dead shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

"Beyond this vale of tears
There is a life above,
Unmeasured by the flight of years;
And all that life is love.

"There is a death, whose pang
Outlasts the fleeting breath;
Oh! what eternal horrors hang
Around the second death!"

To one or the other you are going; and soon, very soon, will the question be determined. But by the mercies of God; by the dying love of Jesus Christ; by the worth of your souls; by the untold happiness of heaven; by the unutterable miseries of hell, I beseech you leave not the determination of that question till it must be settled in the bitter tears and the unavailing regrets of the world of eternal woe! Now is the time of your merciful visitation; now is the time to repent and be converted; to lay hold on Christ, to make

Him your wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; to work while it is called to-day; to acquire the qualifications of heaven—a spiritual taste. Then, and only then, can you expect to see the King in His beauty; enjoy the society of heaven; mingle in its hallowed employments; tune your hearts and your voices to its melodies; take your part in its anthems, and become partakers in its inheritance—incorruptible, undefiled, unfading perfection. *This* is the issue of the work of religion! Earth knows none so great.

DISCOURSE SEVENTY-SEVENTH

STEPHEN OLIN, D.D. LL.D.

This distinguished scholar and divine, who has been called the Chalmers of the Methodist churches, was born in Leicester, Vermont, on the second day of March, 1797. His father, Judge Olin, was for some time Lieutenant-Governor of that State; and secured for his son the advantages of Middlebury College, where he graduated with the highest reputation for talent. After this he went to South Carolina to engage in teaching for a time, where he was converted, and received into the fellowship of the Methodist Episcopal Church. From this time he began to preach as occasion offered, and was soon received by the South Carolina Annual Conference of 1824, as a Methodist probationary traveling preacher, and stationed at Charleston. It was said, by one at the time, that never in the memory of the oldest Methodists, had so powerful a preacher, "burst with so sudden a splendor, and so tremendous an effect upon the Church." He was received, in 1826, into full connection as a preacher, and ordained deacon; but his very feeble health compelled him to locate; and it was not until 1832 that the state of his health allowed of the duties of traveling preacher, when he was received into the Georgia Conference. In 1830, Dr. Olin was elected Professor in the University of Georgia; and three years after, President of Randolph Macon College, Virginia. In 1837, his failing health led him to set sail for an extensive tour in Europe and Asia, the prosecution of which qualified him to write his well-known "Travels in the East." Upon his return to America, he was elected President of the Wesleyan University, in Connecticut, in 1842, over which he presided for nine years, and until the time of his death, which occurred on the 16th of August, 1851.

Dr. Olin was a man of great piety and humility, and was endowed with an intellect of the imperial order, at once acute, penetrating, and profound. As a teacher, he was eminently successful; and in the abilities of a pulpit orator, he is said to have had few equals. Rev. Dr. Wightman of South Carolina, observed, of his sermons, that they were "the grandest exhibitions of intellectual power and gracious unction which were ever witnessed in this or any other country." The working of his mighty intellect, he adds, "reminded one of a steam-engine, of vast power, set up in a frail frame-work, which trembled with every stroke of the piston and revolution of the wheels." The "Methodist Quarterly Review," in an able and appreciative tribute to the worth of Dr. Olin, thus alludes to his ability as a preacher: "In overmastering power in the pulpit, we doubt whether living he had a rival, or dying has left his like among men. His power did not consist in any single quality—in force of reasoning, or fire of imagination, or heat of declamation—but in all combined. His course of argument was always clear and strong, yet interfused throughout with a fervent and glowing passion—the two inseparably united in a torrent that overwhelmed all that listened to him. His was, indeed, the

"'Seraphic intellect and force
To seize and throw the doubts of man;
Impassioned logic which outran
The hearer, in its fiery course.'"

The works of Dr. Olin have been published in two volumes, made up of sermons, and lectures, and addresses. It is much to be regretted that so few of his masterly efforts were reduced to writing. The following discourse is a fair illustration of his preaching. Certain parts of it will compare favorably with the best specimens of pulpit eloquence in our language.

FAITH IN CHRIST THE GREAT WANT OF THE SOUL.

"Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God—believe also in Me."—JOHN, xiv. 1.

The word *believe*, in the original, has in both instances the same form, and the sentence might have been rendered, "Believe in God—believe also in Me," imperatively; or affirmatively in both: "Ye believe in God—ye also believe in Me;" or, as in the English text, the first affirmatively, "Ye believe in God;" the last imperatively, "believe also in Me." Whichever form is adopted, the meaning is so modified by the previous clause, "Let not your heart be troubled," as to convey the same idea—the insufficiency of faith in God alone, and the need of faith in Christ, to dissipate the fears and satisfy the wants of the soul of man.

Travelers have reported of some inconsiderable barbarous tribes that they have no idea of a Supreme Power, the Maker and Ruler of men and of all things. Such reports are probably incorrect, or, if true in a few instances, these are exceptions to what may, with sufficient exactness, be denominated the universal belief in God.

A great many processes of argumentation have been stated as fully justifying, and as having probably led to, this unanimous consent of mankind to the great fundamental truth of religion. They have educed it, it is said, from the relation of cause and effect. Every object and every fact around us has been produced by some cause or agent, and that by some other more remote, and so on up to a first cause, which must needs be the self-existing God. Another process, less complicated and elaborate, which has therefore been thought by many to lead to the universal belief in question is this: I feel myself hemmed in and limited in the use of all my powers of body and mind. It is the same thing, whether I use my intellect, my senses, or my limbs. I can proceed a little way, and then I press against a barrier. I am shut up within the finite, and feel that I am. Now this sense of the finite, say the metaphysicians, unavoidably suggests the idea of the infinite. This painful apprehension of the limited sphere of human capabilities suggests thoughts of the illimitable. My own scanty knowledge and feeble energies throw me upon the contemplation of Omniscience and Omnipotence, and thus necessarily lift me up to the great idea of a God in whom these high attributes reside. Now all this may be true, and I see no objection to such statements, considered merely as arguments. It may be, however, that the human mind reaches the conclusion by some briefer process, or by no process at all. It may be an instinct of our nature to believe in the existence of the Author of our being—that faith in God is a first principle imbosomed in our very nature, and that unbelief is the real product of speculation. It seems to me that Atheism, which denies the existence of God, and Pantheism, which imbues all things and all secondary causes with Divinity, are not the spontaneous growth of the human mind, but of philosophy, falsely so called.

This belief in God, however attained, is not adapted to satisfy the religious wants of man, but rather to fill his bosom with profound anxieties. The moment this great truth is admitted as something more than a pure abstraction, it becomes most startling and alarming. The thought of being in the world with the God of the universe, its Creator, absolute in authority, irresistible in power, and profoundly mysterious in His attributes, purposes, and modes of dealing with His dependent creatures, is, to every one who lifts up his soul to the reception and contemplation of it, absolutely terrific and appalling.

It is "the eternal power and Godhead" of Jehovah that are chiefly disclosed by the works of creation. These attributes tend more to produce terror than to impart consolation and awaken confidence and hope. Nations left to the light of nature seek to avert the anger and enmity of Deity by sacrifices and sufferings, and but seldom indulge in love and gratitude.

Creation and Providence do not teach us God's benevolence. The beauties of nature, the enjoyments of life, might be so understood but for contradictory teaching from convulsions, barrenness, famines, pestilence, poverty, anxieties, disappointments, death. Upon the whole, our present condition can not be reconciled with the belief in God's benevolence, without reference to a future state, to which our present mode of existence holds the relation of a probation. And these are doctrines which the light of nature does not reveal.

Natural arguments for the soul's immortality, though of some value to enforce and illustrate the doctrine as revealed in Christ, are of no worth out of that connection. The strongest of these are,

1. The nobler powers of the mind, adapted to higher pursuits and contemplations. Yet, in most cases, these powers are little developed—hardly enough to fit men for their duties—and they tend to things sensual and worldly so generally and strongly as to lead to the belief that they are only destined to live for the present.

2. The continual progress of the soul in knowledge and virtue; and yet, in the natural course of things, the mind declines with the body as old age comes on, and seems extinct with death.

3. The strong desire for immortality. Yet other desires still stronger—those for life and happiness—are disregarded in God's administration. Life and immortality were brought to light by Christ, and were only guessed at by the heathen; and there is nothing in mere Theism to satisfy the soul that it shall exist after death; or, if it does, that existence can be otherwise than wretched. Men are pushed up to the brink of the grave with no light beyond—doubtful, at best, of all beyond. The vast procession of humanity, swept on by an invisible fate, plunges into a midnight gulf. Generation after generation disappears, and no one knows their destiny. We look above, around to men, onward to the departed, to all in vain, for a solution of our dreadful doubts. No voice is heard. It is a still and dark domain, that of death. Is the soul to think, to feel, to joy, to suffer, to hope, to aspire no more? Is all to return to

dust? Will the uplifted arm of God crush the spiritual as it demolishes the material? Will there be no more imaginings—sleeping, waking visions? no more communings with those we love? no greetings? no sympathies? The deep struggling of the soul against depravity and corruption—the hungering and thirsting after the true, the pure, the lovely—was it all for naught? Does it end here? Shall this struggle be the end of me? the gloomy pit of corruption be my home evermore, and make me the equal—the victim of the loathsome worm, that but to-morrow shall begin his feast upon my flesh? Has the wisdom of man, has the experience of the entire race, has the religion of nature—Theism or Deism—has any but God, has God out of Christ any answer for these interrogatories of a dying, despairing race? No! There is no answer. Earth, and the shades below, and heaven above, deny all response—all hope to the soul in its hour of suspense, and agony, and doom. And here we are driven forward, an unwilling herd, toward this fatal limit—looking for light, and there is no ray; calling for help, and there is no answer!

This horror of being nothing would be the grand evil; this suspense as to the future would be the natural and fierce plague of the soul under the circumstances supposed, and which must cling to our very being without the aid of the Gospel.

In some minds, the question of immortality has received a partial solution. Doubt, if not hope, has possibly taken the place of absolute despair. Let us suppose the light thus attained by a few to be general or universal; that through philosophy, or tradition, or innate teachings, the mystery were quite chased away, or that an audible voice proclaimed from heaven, "We shall live forever. The body even shall revive, and the soul shall be immortal." Would such a faith satisfy the human mind? It would satisfy one demand of our nature and condition, but it would awaken new anxieties harder to allay or appease. Who can feel the import of the announcement, You shall exist evermore? Under what conditions? With the same infirmities, liabilities, wants, tendencies, aspirations? Exposed, as here, to pain, loss, disappointment, toil? Surrounded, as here, with temptations, dangers, foes? with wicked men? What joys are there really adapted to the soul's wants? I have tried wealth, luxury, ambition; and in less than threescore years and ten, have lost all my relish for them. Friends have deceived. Success has palled upon me. All is vanity and vexation of spirit. Is there no better lot nor hope? Then death were better than life, and an untimely birth than endless being.

We must spend this eternity in the domains of an eternal, omnipotent God. We tremble at this association. We have no ascertained relations with the Almighty One. There is no covenant between us. What are his dispositions toward us? We have known much of His severity and His judgments. Will He make my eternal lot happy or wretched? Perhaps wretched. The cup of human misery has even run over in His presence. Most are poor. Many suffer clear through this state of existence. May they not through the next? The best men often suffer most here. What security is there for the future?

Admit, now, the idea that man is alienated from God by sin, and nothing more is wanting to complete His despair. God's justice, then, requires our misery; His holiness, our banishment from His presence. There is in this Deistic dispensation no place for repentance. We see vice and sin left to produce their own consequences, and God does not interfere in compassion. Intemperance, prodigality, debauchery lead always to evil, often to ruin here; and we can only infer from the things seen that so it will be through eternity. Remedies, interpositions to rescue, mediation, substitution, pardon, all are unknown where Christ is not.

These considerations and statements expose the wants which a fuller, brighter dispensation is required to satisfy. Deism—"faith in God"—is adapted to awaken, not to calm our fears; to trouble the heart, not to assuage its griefs and anxieties. It may be a co-worker with the law. It may disclose our wants and perils. It may even bring us to Christ, but has no sufficiency to satisfy or save.

"Believe also in Me," is the complement of the text, which quite provides for all the contingencies and necessities of our moral and spiritual nature—all the wants which this train of reflections has suggested, and all that are liable to be felt or encountered by man in his endless career.

Nature teaches only the "eternal power and Godhead" of the Almighty—His terrible majesty, and His ability to destroy as well as aid us. Christ teaches that "God is love;" that He "careth for us;" that not a hair of our heads falls without Him; "that like as a father pitieth his children," so does God pity His creatures; that He is indeed our Father.

Death, "the king of terrors," the abhorrence of our nature and of natural religion, becomes, under the economy which "brings life and immortality to light," an open door into the world of glory. Death has lost his sting—he is a conquered enemy.

The Gospel dispensation explains whatever is anomalous and unintelligible in our present condition. The labors, the anxieties, the disappointments, the mortifications, the bereavements, the sufferings that make up our history here are all clearly interpreted. These, to an irreligious mind, are wholly inexplicable upon any theory which stops short of rejecting a superintending Providence altogether, or which, indeed, does not go the length of absolute atheism, and leave the affairs of this world, so far as they transcend the grasp of mere human control, to the ministrations of blind, mindless accident. Many good men, too, who are far from calling in question the Divine prerogative of God, and would shudder at the thought of dwelling in a world where he does not reign over all, are yet grievously puzzled with this class of phenomena. Conscious of their own demerits, of the justice of every chastisement that falls upon them, they are yet left to wonder why, if God is merciful, and they are His friends and His children, little or no distinction should be made between them and His open foes. They draw inferences not unfavorable to the Divine mercy or veracity, but to their own real character and relation to God. They write bitter things against themselves, and conclude that they are bastards and not sons, because they have part in afflictions whereof all are partakers.

I am not stating an imaginary or an unfrequent case in human experience. It is a view of God's administration upon which multitudes dwell habitually, and which has shed its saddening influences upon many passages in almost every good man's history. It is the natural fruit of a narrow, imperfect, deistic faith. Now faith in Christ—a simple, hearty reception of the whole truth as it is in Jesus—offers not some palliation of this chief trouble of so many sincere hearts, but a positive and satisfactory solution of the whole difficulty. Each of the hundred texts in the New Testament which teach us that suffering here is rather disciplinary than punitive, and that temporal afflictions are busy in working out for good men, who walk not after the flesh, the most excellent spiritual and eternal results, teaches a philosophy in the light of which all doubt vanishes away, and all contradictions find reconciliation. We have here the true theory of the world under God's administration—the basis of a system in which every intelligible fact, every dark event, the entire chaos of human affairs, have their appropriate place, and become explicable in perfect harmony with the Divine attributes, and with man's nature and destiny. All appearance and suspicion of accident, or chance, or blind destiny vanish away at the coming in of this evangelical faith; and all the disappointments, and disasters, and sufferings of men, and all the confusion, and crash, and wreck of external things, stand revealed in the light of this large, Divine philosophy as a vast apparatus for the production and culture of those high moral virtues which shall be in request in the society and services of heaven.

Whatever may be the kind, or degree, or duration of a good man's sufferings, this last and proper view of the Christian dispensation is always sufficient to calm his anxieties and silence all complaints. It is God's chosen way to make men holier on earth and happier in heaven. It is idle, it is hardly innocent, to talk of the mysteriousness of such providences. They constitute an important part of God's revealed and predestined plan for saving the world and refitting our fallen souls with such virtues and capabilities as are best adapted to a heavenly career. Every position in life, each mode of suffering, each sphere of acting, becomes a favorable point for the development of Christian virtues. The poor man's poverty, the sick man's suffering, the rich man's affluence, the wise man's knowledge, constitute occasions or instruments for promoting the highest conceivable ends of the Divine administration. All apparently fortuitous changes are only so many conjectures divinely appointed for the profitable exercise or honorable manifestation of those gracious attributes with which the Gospel will enrich and beautify its disciples.

It is meet and right, and our bounden duty, to welcome such views of the Gospel, and to stir up our spirits to the exercise of such a faith. It is the high privilege of every good man to go forth under the inspiring and assured conviction that all things work together for his good; that light afflictions here will certainly add to the exceeding weight of eternal glory; and that, if he is led on by an invisible hand through the deepest waters and the hottest fires, it only betokens a more splendid triumph, and a higher destiny, and should admonish him to lift up from depths that have come over his soul a louder cry unto God, and to urge through the thick clouds beyond which the Divine presence dwells concealed, the acclamation of a braver faith, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

Here I could wish that I had a moment to contrast with the Divine system which I have so imperfectly developed—the system which regards all physical and social good and evil as instrumental in the production of great moral results, with that mere worldly philosophy which esteems these only as the accidents and anamolies attendent on what is called human progress—a theory which can give no better account of the revolutions and sufferings of the race in all past time, than that they have developed great principles in government and art, and the economy of life; and that they tend to a consummation already visible in the dim future, in which the masses shall be well fed, taught, and governed—in which China shall enjoy trial by jury, and Russia universal suffrage. How worthy of a wise, merciful God is the former view, making all things promotive of holiness and happiness! How heartless and worldly the last, which accounts of immortal men and of past generations as of the rank vegetation that grows and decays to fatten the soil for a better crop!

The Gospel also satisfies the anxious inquiries of the soul with regard to its moral obligations, relations, and tendencies. It answers the momentous question, What does God demand of us? Its announcements on these points are, indeed, sufficiently repulsive and appalling. As to all moral interests, it declares that we are hopelessly ruined. The Almighty is our enemy—we are His enemies. We are without strength or power to relieve us, and the curse—the wrath of God—abides upon us. Repentance can not atone for the past, or insure acceptance for the future. No efforts of any sort can bring us upon a better footing. So radical is the moral defection, that, do what we will, we can not obey or love—we can not even desire to do so; so that the alienation from God, and banishment from all holy associations, and all elevating, spiritual pursuits and enjoyments result no less from our own dispositions and tendencies, than from the Divine justice. Such announcements from the "God over all," are truly calculated to "trouble the heart;" but when danger is real and imminent, any thing is better than false security—than to sleep on the brink of ruin. The soul would know the worst of its prospect. Effort, even when vain, ministers a temporary solace, and the human mind would rather look its fearful destiny in the face, and even make a covenant with hell, than be surprised into it.

Surely no homily upon sin and the sinner's doom was ever half so appalling and effective as a silent contemplation of the great catastrophe upon the cross. We see God's abhorrence of sin—what an odious, terrible element it is in His moral system. The dignity, the suffering, the condescension of the holy Victim—what do they teach but God's utter abhorrence of our moral character? His irreconcilable opposition to man in his present false position? The agony of the Garden is a more fearful manifestation of this than the damnation of the entire race, of which it is a kind of epitome. How deep the stain, how desperate the malady which called for such an interference! I think this view of sin, if fairly entertained, would be strictly intolerable—overwhelming to the human soul. We need preach no more about the atrocity and danger of sin, could we induce men to look upon the exhibition of its consequences as seen upon the cross.

The cross teaches another lesson. It "troubles" the heart by a fearful manifestation of God's hatred of sin, but it inspires hope by the provision which it makes for the sinner. Why this sacrifice? It had been easy to apply a cheaper remedy, to destroy, to cut off the tainted race of men. This costlier plan speaks of God's compassion for the sinner. He hates sin, but will save the transgressor. It is not wrath, wholly or chiefly that is manifested. No. "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This shows His disposition toward the sinner. He will make smaller, having made the great sacrifice. He will withhold no needful help, now that the mighty design has been so seriously entered upon. Christ, too, was voluntary in the sacrifice, not compelled. He contemplated the burden He was about to assume. He would have turned the cup away, but not if He must drink it. "Let this cup pass," He said, when the agony, the mocking, the cruel injustice of Pilate's tribunal, the contradiction of sinners, the contempt of the people, the final pang was full and near before Him. "If it be possible, let this cup pass," but not if be Thy will—not if the condition be imperative—not if the great plan will thus be frustrated; for, to this end came I into the world.

This is the grand central position of the Gospel—is the Gospel itself. He who believes in the crucified Saviour believes the Gospel —hath eternal life. This is the true point of view whence it must be contemplated, or all is vain, the source of saving light—of all consolation to troubled hearts. We stand by the cross of Christ and cry "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." This is our message, our argument, our doctrine, our warning to the impenitent, our encouragement for the sorrowing, the rich hope of the believer. When we can induce a man to fix his gaze upon the cross, our work is done. He is there taught of God. We step aside, and only beseech him to keep his gaze directed to the Lamb. There he will learn all. He will hate the sins that wounded his Lord. He will believe in all the word of God, which is so gloriously and wonderfully fulfilled. His doubts will vanish in the clear light of such a demonstration. No heart can withstand the affecting vision. The sinner sees Jesus as He is—all compassionate, amiable, divine. He will be speedily transformed by gazing upon the exhibition. Gratitude, heavenly love, blessed confidence steal into his soul, as it waits in rapt and adoring contemplation of Him "who first loved us." None can bear away from such a presence a lingering doubt, "a troubled heart," an unbelieving fear. None but a stupid, hardened sinner can endure the sight unmoved; and even he—he has not seen Christ, his eyes are held, he is blind; yea, if our Gospel be hidden from him he is lost, and the god of this world has indeed blinded his eyes.

I linger here, because I feel that this view of Christ involves not only very important but all-essential truth—nothing more is wanting to the soul's comfort or salvation. I must yet speak briefly of other blessed adaptations of the Christian system.

I will refer to the kind and degree of evidence which attends and attests true interior religion—not historical and external evidence, which, however clear and valuable, presents a demand for erudition and study, and a large intellectual grasp, and is, so far, less adapted to the common mind; but internal, experimental evidence, which is liable neither to doubts nor cavilings. Nothing short of certainty can satisfy or ought to satisfy a soul whose eternity is the question in debate. It is madness to be quiet and satisfied so long as we are in doubt whether we are the friends or the enemies of God. The soul can not, must not rest in suspense. The heart is troubled, tortured by suspense. Nice deductions, conclusions arrived at by ingenious concatenated trains of argument, may do in the forum or in a show of dialectics, but bring no comfort to a soul that has roused itself to the inquiry, Am I God's friend or foe? Now the great proofs on which the Gospel relies are demonstrations made to the moral perceptions of man, and are quite independent of logic and metaphysics. Even the preliminary evidences and influences of the Gospel are of this sort. The true light shines into all hearts directly from God. The Spirit operates divinely upon all, and all have a witness within that responds to the Gospel message. We rely exclusively on this voice of God within when we press religious truth on sinners. We know they believe, for God insures it.

Still less is the reality of reconciliation with God and justification by faith left to doubtful inferences. The Spirit of God bears witness within to the great moral revolution; and who could endure to rest in such a matter on lower testimony? who could cease from the troubles of his smitten heart? who could rejoice evermore? who could exult in Christ his Saviour? who glory in heavenly prospects, so long as doubt hovered over his mind? It were absolute madness. The spirit of a man can not rest till the day-star arise in the heart—till Christ be found within, the hope of glory—till the filial cry of

"Abba, Father" comes up spontaneously from the depths within. And this is just the evidence which the Gospel offers; and they who rest short of it enter but slightly into its true genius, and but poorly avail themselves of its provisions.

This evidence, so indispensable to our peace at the outset, is seconded, confirmed, and almost forgotten, in the progress of experience, in that of love, which becomes the engrossing principle in a state of mature piety. The tendency of spiritual life and gracious influence is to produce a oneness of purpose with Christ, a sympathy with His interests and glory, an intense affection for His character, attributes, and designs, which in some measure supersedes, or rather involves and absorbs faith, hope, and every other grace and virtue. The soul imbued with love to Christ is one with Him in such a sense as to feel a spontaneous assurance of His favor. It thinks little of what proof may exist of a fact which is part and parcel of its existence, which has living demonstration in all its strong impulses and aspirations. Such a one communes with Christ. Christ is formed within him, lives in him, and he no longer asks, Who shall ascend into heaven to bring Christ from above, or who shall descend into the deep, that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead? The confidence of loving and of being loved becomes entire, wanting nothing; and to be Christ's forever becomes more a reality already entered upon than a question about which there are doubtful inquiries to be held.

It is quite in the spirit of my text to notice how much the incarnation of Christ and His participation of our nature tend to the production of this blessed confidence in Him. We contemplate Him as a man born of a woman, partaker of our weaknesses and wants. We look upon Him as a son—a kinsman—a philanthropist. Our sympathies warm—our affections are elicited. We dare to love—we can love Him. The distance and the dignity of the infinite are vailed, and we hail a Brother, and receive a Friend and a Benefactor into our swelling hearts.

DISCOURSE SEVENTY-EIGHTH.

JOHN SUMMERFIELD, A.M.

The "seraphic Summerfield," as he has often been called, was born in England, January 31, 1798, and came to New York in 1821. His appearance, like a bright comet shooting athwart the heavens, attracted universal admiration. Crowds flocked to the places where he was to preach, and hung with emotions of wonder and delight upon his lips. His course, however, was destined to be as short as it was brilliant. Health failed him, and on this account he was compelled to visit France in 1823; but the mild climate proving of no avail, he returned to New York, and died June 13, 1825, aged twenty-seven years.

As a field-preacher, Summerfield stood alongside of Whitfield in powerful, persuasive eloquence. An eye-witness has said of him:—"In very early life, a student in Washington city, I heard the famous Summerfield, a young Methodist itinerant. His face and form were of womanly, almost of angelic beauty. A divine luster beamed in his eyes. His clear, full, sonorous voice fell like the tones of a mountain-bell one moment, and anon came crashing, thundering down, with terrible effect, on the startled masses, forcing them to cry aloud and crowd together, with uplifted arms, as though for shelter from an impending avalanche. His eloquence shook sin from its citadels, and dragged vice and fashion from their 'pride of place.' The sensation he produced was tremendous, and multitudes followed his footsteps."

Much of Summerfield's power over an audience was doubtless due to his manner and action, which are said to have been perfect. His style of address, also, was simple and natural, and the truths he presented were such as were instinctively responded to by the human heart. This admirable simplicity of style could not fail to produce its effect. But the peculiar charm seems to have been his *meekness*, sweet humility, fervent piety, and lowliness of spirit. Every one saw in him, as it were, the personification of the meek and lowly Jesus, and could not but admire and love.

But few, if any, of Summerfield's sermons were written out in full, as he preached from a brief outline. He was, however, in the habit of writing down from recollection what he had delivered; and to this we owe the volume of sketches and sermons which has been given to the public. James Montgomery, the poet, having examined a volume of his sermons, in manuscript, remarked of them: "They are exceedingly methodical in plan and in execution; they are distinguished chiefly by sound doctrine, exact judgment, and severe abstinence from ornament." Many of his sermons are of real value, containing striking thoughts and beautiful imagery. To this class belongs the one which we have selected.

THE HEAVENLY INHERITANCE.

"For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—2 PETER, i. 11.

Of all the causes which may be adduced to account for the indifference which is so generally manifested toward those great concerns of eternity, in which men are so awfully interested, none appears to me so likely to resolve the mystery, as that *unbelief* which lies at the core of every heart, hindering repentance, and so making faith impossible. Men hear that there is a hell to shun, a heaven to win; and, though they give their assent to both these truths, they never impress them on their mind. It is plain that, whatever their lips may confess, they never believed with the heart, otherwise some effect would have been produced in the life. The germ of unbelief lies within, and discovers itself in all that indifference which is displayed, in the majority of that class of beings whose existence is to be perpetuated throughout eternity.

If these thoughts do sometimes obtrude themselves on their serious attention, they are immediately banished from their minds; and the dying exclamation of Moses may be taken up with tears by every lover of perishing sinners: "O! that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" When God, by His prophet Isaiah, called the Israelites to a sense of their awful departure from Him, His language was, "My people do not know: My people do not consider." How few are there like Mary, who "ponder these things in their heart," who are willing to look at themselves, to pry into eternity, to put the question home,

"Shall I be with the damn'd cast out,
Or numbered with the bless'd?"

This question must sooner or later have a place in your minds, or awful will be your state indeed; let it reach your hearts to-day; and if you pray to the Father of light, you will soon be enabled in His light to discern so much of yourselves as will cause you to cry, "What shall I do to be saved?" While we shall this morning attempt to point out some of the privileges of the sons of God, O! may your hearts catch the strong desire to be conformed to the living Head, that so an abundant entrance may be administered unto you also, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The privilege to which our text leads us, is exclusively applicable to those to whom that question has been solved by the Spirit of God; those who have believed to the saving of their souls; who have experienced redemption through His blood, and the forgiveness of sins; and who are walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.

I. *The state to which we look forward:* the "everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour."

1. It is a *kingdom.* By this figurative expression our Lord has described the state of grace here and of glory hereafter; our happiness in time and our happiness in eternity. They were wisely so called: Jesus has said as well as done all things well; for these two states differ not in kind, but in degree; the one is merely a preparative for the other, and he who has been a subject of the former kingdom will be a subject of the latter. Grace is but the seed of glory, glory is the maturity of grace; grace is but the bud of glory, glory is grace full blown; grace is but the blossom of glory, glory is the ripe fruit of grace; grace is but the infant of glory, glory is the perfection of grace. Hence our hymn beautifully says, "The men of grace have found glory begun below," agreeing with our Lord's own words, "He that believeth hath everlasting life;" he feels even here its glories beginning—a foretaste of its bliss.

Now the propriety with which these two states are called *kingdoms,* is manifest from the analogy which might be traced between them and the model of a human sovereignty. Two or three of the outlines of this model will be sufficient.

In the idea of a kingdom it is implied that in some part of its extent, there is the residence of a sovereign; for this is essential to constitute it. Now in the kingdom of grace the heart of the believer is made the residence of the King Invisible! "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" Such know what that promise means, "I will dwell in them, and they shall be My people." St. Paul exultingly cries, "Christ liveth in me."

Again, it is essential that the inhabitants of a kingdom be under the government of its laws. An empire without laws is no sovereignty at all; it ceases to be such, for every inhabitant has an equal right to do that which seems good in his own eyes. Now the subjects of Christ's kingdom of grace are "not without law, but are under a law to Christ;" they do His righteous will! Lastly, it is essential that the subjects of a kingdom be under the protection of the presiding monarch, and that they repose their confidence in Him. To the subjects of the kingdom of grace, Christ imparts His kingly protection; this is their heritage: "No weapon formed against them shall prosper;" nay, He imparts to them of His royal bounty, and they enjoy all the blessings of an inward heaven.

But how great the perfection of the kingdom of glory mentioned in our text! Does He make these vile bodies His residence here? How much more glorious is His temple above! how splendid the court of heaven! There, indeed, He fixes His throne, and they see Him as He is. Does He exercise His authority here, and rule His happy subjects by the law, the perfect law of love? How much more in heaven! He reigns there forever over them; His government is there wholly by Himself; He knows nothing of a rival there; His rule is sole and perfect: there they serve Him day and night. Are His subjects here partakers of His kingly bounty? Much more in heaven! He calls them to a participation of all the joys, the spiritual joys which are at His right hand, and the pleasures which are there forevermore. Yet, after all our descriptions of that glory, it is not yet revealed, and, therefore, inconceivable. But who would not hail such a Son of David? who would not desire to be swayed by such a Prince of Peace? Whose heart would not ascend with the affections of our poet, "O! that with yonder sacred throng, we at His feet may fall?"

2. But it is an *everlasting* kingdom! Here it rises in the scale of comparison. Weigh the kingdoms of this world in this balance, and they are found wanting; for on many we read their fatal history, and ere long we shall see them all branded with the writing of the Invisible Agent, "The kingdom is taken from thee, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof;" "For the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ;" they will be all absorbed and swallowed up in the fullness of eternity, and leave not a wreck behind! Every thing here is perishable! The towering diadem of Cæsar has fallen from his head and crumbled into dust; and that kingdom whose scepter once swayed the world, betwixt whose colossal stride all nations were glad to creep to find themselves dishonored graves, is now forgotten, or, if

its recollection be preserved, its history is emphatically called "The Decline and Fall."

But bring the matter nearer home; apply not to multitudes of subjects, but to your individual experience, and has not that good Teacher instructed you in this sad lesson? We tremble to look at our earthly possessions and employments, lest we should see them in motion, spreading their wings to fly away! How many are there already who, in talking of their comforts, are obliged to go back in their reckoning! Would not this be the language of some of you: "I *had*—I *had* a husband, the sharer of my joys, the soother of my sorrows; but he is not! I *had* a wife, a helpmeet for me; but where is she? I *had* children to whom I looked up as my support and staff in the decline of life, while passing down the hill; but I am bereaved of my children! I *had* health, and I highly prized its wealth; but now my emaciated frame, my shriveled system, and the pains of nature bespeak that comfort fled! I *had*, or fondly thought I had, happiness in possession! Then I said with Job, "I shall die in my nest!" but ah! an unexpected blast passed over me, and now my joys are blighted! "They have fled as a shadow, and continued not." Yes! time promised you much! perhaps it performed a little; but it can not do any thing for you on which it can grave *eternal*. Its name is mortal, its nature is decay; it was born with man, and when the generations of men shall cease to exist, it will cease also: "Time shall be no longer!" We know concerning these that, "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower fadeth, but the word of the Lord endureth forever." Yes! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; glory can not corrupt! the crown of glory can not fade! Why? Death will be destroyed; Christ will put this last enemy under His feet, and all will then be eternal life! Oh happy, happy kingdom; nay, thrice happy he who shall be privileged to be its subject!

3. It is the everlasting kingdom *of our own Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* It is His by claim: "Him hath God the Father highly exalted;" yea, Him hath He appointed to be "the Judge of quick and dead;" for though "by the sufferings of death He was made a little lower than the angels," yet immediately after His resurrection He declares that now "All power is given unto him in heaven and in earth!" The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son, and He has now the disposal of the offices and privileges of the empire among His faithful followers. This is the idea that the penitent dying thief had on the subject: "Lord remember me when Thou

comest into Thy kingdom;" and St. Paul expresses the same when he says to Timothy in the confidence of faith, "The Lord shall deliver me and preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom." Oh! how pleasing the thought to the child of God, that his ruler to all eternity will be his elder Brother; for He who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; and though He is heir of all things, yet we, as younger branches of the same heavenly family, shall be joint heirs, fellow-heirs of the same glorious inheritance. How great will be our joy to behold Him who humbled Himself for us to death, even the death of the cross, now exalted God over all, blessed for evermore; and while contemplating Him under the character of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, how great the relish which will be given to that feeling of the redeemed which will constrain them to cry, "Thou alone art worthy to receive glory, and honor, and power."

II. But the apostle reminds us of the *entrance* into this kingdom!

1. The entrance into this kingdom is *death:* "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin:"

"Death, like a narrow sea, divides
That heavenly land from ours!"

"A messenger is sent to bring us to God, but it is the King of Terrors. We enter the land flowing with milk and honey, but it is through the valley of the shadow of death." Yet fear not, O thou child of God! there is no need that thou, through the fear of death, shouldst be all thy lifetime subject to bondage.

2. No; hear the apostle: the entrance is *ministered* unto thee! Death is but His minister; he can not lock his ice-cold hand in thine till He permit. Our Jesus has the keys of hell and death; and till He liberates the vassal to bring thee home, not a hair of thy head can fall to the ground! Fear not, thou worm! He who minds the sparrows appoints the time for thy removal: fear not; only be thou always ready, that, whenever the Messenger comes to take down the tabernacle in which thy spirit has long made her abode, thou mayest be able to exclaim, "Amen! even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Death need have no terrors for thee; he is the vassal of thy Lord, and, however unwilling to do him reverence, yet to him that sits at God's right hand shall even death pay, if not a joyful, yet a trembling homage; nay, more:

"To Him shall earth and hell submit,
And every foe shall fall,
Till death *expires* beneath His feet,
And God is all in all."

Christ has already had one triumph over death; His iron pangs could not detain the Prince who has "life in Himself;' and in His strength thou shalt triumph, for the power of Christ is promised to rest upon thee! He has had the same entrance; His footsteps marked the way, and His cry to thee is, "Follow thou Me." "My sheep," says He, "Hear My voice, and they do follow Me;" they follow Me gladly, even into this gloomy vale; and what is the consequence? "They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand."

3. It is ministered unto you *abundantly*. Perhaps the apostle means that the death of some is distinguished by indulgences and honors not vouchsafed to all. In the experience of some, the passage appears difficult; in others it is comparatively easy; they gently fall asleep in Jesus. But we not only see diversities in the mortal agony—this would be a small thing. * * * Some get in with sails full spread and carrying a rich cargo indeed, while others arrive barely on a single plank. Some, who have long had their conversation in heaven, are anxious to be wafted into the celestial haven; while others, who never sought God till alarmed at the speedy approach of death, have little confidence,

"And linger shivering on the brink,
And fear to launch away."

This doctrine must have been peculiarly encouraging to the early converts to whom St. Peter wrote. From the tenor of both of his epistles it is clear that they were in a state of severe suffering, and in great danger of apostatizing through fear of persecution. He reminds them that if they hold fast their professions, an abundant entrance will be ministered unto them. The death of the martyr is far more glorious than that of the Christian who concealed his profession through fear of man. Witness the case of Stephen: he was not ashamed of being a witness for Jesus in the face of the violent death which awaited him, and which crushed the tabernacle of his devoted spirit; his Lord reserved the highest display of His love and of His glory for that awful hour! "Behold!" says he to his enemies, while gnashing on him with their teeth, "Behold! I see heaven opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God:" then, in the full triumph of faith, he cries out, "Lord Jesus! receive my spirit!"

But did these things apply merely to the believers to whom St. Peter originally wrote? No; you are the men to whom they equally apply; according to your walk and profession of that Gospel will be the entrance which will be ministered unto you. Some of you have heard, in another of our houses, during the past week, the dangerous tendency of the spirit of fear, the fear of man. I would you had all heard that discourse: alas! many who have a name and a place among us are becoming mere Sabbath-day worshipers in the courts of the Lord, and lightly esteem the daily means of grace. I believe this is one cause at least why many are weak and sickly among us in divine things. The inner man does not make due increase; the world is stealing a march unawares upon us. May God revive among us the spirit of our fathers!

These things, then, I say, equally apply to you. Behold the strait, the royal, the king's highway! Are you afraid of the reproach of Christ?

"Ashamed of Jesus, that dear Friend
On whom our hopes of heaven depend?"

How soon would the world be overcome if all who profess that faith were faithful to it! Woe to the rebellious children who compromise truth with the world, and in effect deny their Lord and Master! Who hath required this at their hands? Do they not follow with the crowd who cry, "Lord, Lord! and yet do not the things which He says?" Will they have the adoption and the glory? Will they aim at the honor implied in these words, "Ye are my witnesses?" Will *ye* indeed be sons? Then see the path wherein His footsteps shine! The way is open! see that ye walk therein! The false apostles, the deceitful workers shall have their reward; the same that those of old had, the praise and esteem of men; while the faith of those who truly call Him Father and Lord, and who walk in the light as He is in the light, who submit, like Him and His true followers, to be counted as "the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things, shall be found unto praise, and honor, and glory!

The true Christian does not seek to hide himself in a corner; he lets his light shine before men, whether they will receive it or not; and thereby is his Father glorified. Having thus served, by the will of God, the hour of his departure at length arrives. The angels beckon him away; Jesus bids him come; and as he departs this life he looks back with a heavenly smile on surviving friends, and is enabled to say, "Whither I go, ye know, and the way ye know." An entrance is ministered unto him abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of his Lord and Saviour.

III. Having considered the state to which we look, and the mode of our admission, let us consider *the condition of it.* This is implied in the word "*so.*" For *so* an entrance shall be ministered unto you.

In the preceding part of this chapter, the apostle has pointed out the meaning of this expression, and in the text merely sums it all up in that short mode of expression.

The first condition he shows to be, the obtaining like precious faith with him, through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. Not a faith which merely assents to the truths of the Gospel record, but a faith which applies the merits of the death of Christ to expiate *my* individual guilt; which lays hold on Him as *my* sacrifice, and produces, in its exercises, peace with God, a knowledge of the divine favor, a sense of sin forgiven, and a full certainty, arising from a divine impression on the heart, made by the Spirit of God, that I am accepted in the Beloved and made a child of God.

If those who profess the Gospel of Christ were but half as zealous in seeking after this enjoyment, as they are in discovering creaturely objections to its attainment, it would be enjoyed by thousands who at present know nothing of its happy reality. Such persons, unfortunately for themselves, employ much more assiduity in searching a vocabulary to find out epithets of reproach to attach to those who maintain the doctrine, than in searching that volume which declares that "if you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father;" and that "he that believeth hath the witness in himself." In whatever light a scorner may view this doctrine now, the time will come when, being found without the wedding garment, he will be cast into outer darkness.

O sinner! cry to God this day to convince thee of thy need of this salvation, and then thou wilt be in a condition to receive it:

"Shalt know, shalt feel thy sins forgiven,
Bless'd with this antepast of heaven."

But, besides this, the apostle requires that we then henceforth preserve consciences void of offense toward God and toward man. This faith which obtains the forgiveness of sin unites to Christ, and by this union we are made, as St. Peter declares, "partakers of the Divine nature:" and as He who has called you is holy, so you are to be holy in all manner of conversation. For yours is a faith which not only casts out sin, but purifies the heart—the conscience having been once purged by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, you are not to suffer guilt to be again contracted; for the salvation of Christ is not only from the penalty, but from the very stain of sin; not only from its guilt, but from its pollution; not only from its condemnation, but from its very in-being: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin;" and "For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." You are therefore required by St. Peter, "to escape the corruption that is in the world through lust," and thus to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord!

Finally, live in progressive and practical godliness. Not only possess, but practice the virtues of religion; not only practice, but increase therein, abounding in the work of the Lord! Lead up, hand in hand, in the same delightful chorus, all the graces which adorn the Christian character. Having the Divine nature, possessing a new and living principle, let diligent exercise reduce it to practical holiness; and you will be easily discerned from those formal hypocrites, whose faith and religion are but a barren and unfruitful speculation.

To conclude: live *to* God—live *for* God—live *in* God; and let your moderation be known unto all men—the Lord is at hand: "Therefore giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance: and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity."

DISCOURSE SEVENTY-NINTH.

BELA B. EDWARDS, D.D.

Professor Edwards was born at Southampton, Massachusetts, on the 4th of July, 1802. He sprang from that old Welsh family which embraces among its descendants the two Jonathan Edwards, and President Dwight. He was graduated at Amherst College, in 1824, and having become pious during his collegiate course, commenced his career of distinguished usefulness. A year was first spent in superintending the Academy at Ashfield, where his studies were kept up with great diligence. In 1825 he entered the Andover Theological Institution, and in doing it, "entered on the elysium of his life." At the close of the first year he was called to a tutorship in Amherst College, which office he filled for two years. On the 8th of May, 1828, he was elected Assistant Secretary of the American Education Society, and while discharging the duties of that office, resided at Andover, where he pursued, meanwhile, the studies of the two remaining years in the Seminary.

In 1833 Mr. Edwards established the American Quarterly Observer, which, three years after, was united with the Biblical Repository. He remained sole editor of these combined periodicals from January, 1835, to January, 1838. In the autumn of 1837 he was appointed Professor of the Hebrew language in the Seminary at Andover; and in 1848 was elected to the chair of Biblical Literature. In this occupation, as a Biblical teacher, he spent the remainder of his life. It was on the 20th of April, 1852, that he yielded to the ravages of a pulmonary disease, long preying upon him, and breathed out his spirit "just as an infant falls asleep."

As a Christian, Professor Edwards walked in all humility and devotion with his God. As a scholar and editor, he gained the profoundest respect, and has left the abiding imprint of his genius upon the theological literature of the country. For twenty-three years he was employed in superintending some of the most solid and influential periodical issues in the world. As a friend and advocate of ministerial education, and as a Biblical teacher, few men have done more to elevate the ministry than he. As a preacher, he lacked the elements of a pulpit orator; but his terse, sententious utterances, and his classic purity of style, fascinated the appreciative hearers, and rivetted their attention to the great truths brought before them. It has been said of his sermons that "they were free from common-places, and had a luxuriance of thought and feeling which reminded one of the trees with their branches bending and breaking under their fruit." Professor E. A. Park, D.D., has given to the world, in two volumes 12mo, with a memoir, many of the sermons and other writings of Professor Edwards. That which is here given is the first of the series, and has been justly pronounced "an exquisite example of practical exposition, founded on the nicest analysis, and the deepest insight of feeling." It is *a thing of beauty* from beginning to ending.

THE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-NINTH PSALM.

The book of Psalms has ever been regarded in the Christian Church as an overflowing fountain of religious experience. "Where do we find," says Luther, "a sweeter voice of joy than in the Psalms of thanksgiving and praise? There you look into the heart of all the godly as into a beautiful garden—as into heaven itself. What delicate, sweet, and lovely flowers are there springing up of all manner of beautiful, joyous thoughts toward God and His goodness! On the other hand, where do you find more profound, mournful, pathetic expressions of sorrow than the plaintive Psalms contain? The Psalter forms, as it were, a little book for all saints, in which every man, in whatever situation he may be placed, shall find Psalms and sentiments which shall apply to his own case, and be the same to him as if they were for his own sake alone; so expressed as he could not express them himself, nor find nor even wish them better than they are."

But admirably fitted as the Psalms are for all the varieties of Christian experience, meditated upon and practically used as they have been in all ages, still they are not, as they might be, the cherished companions, the trusty guides, of all who would walk safely along the valley of the shadow of death. Much oftener than they do, might Christians repair to these deep wells of salvation. More at leisure, with less hurried step, they might wander over these green pastures. Richer and far more varied nutriment these bountiful storehouses supply, than the casual visitor imagines. Mines of wealth yet unexplored still exist to reward the patient laborer.

The partial and unsatisfactory use which is often made of the

Psalms, may be accounted for from a variety of causes, in addition to the want of an appreciating and sympathizing disposition in the reader.

Some of the Psalms, and passages in many of them, allude to a state of society, pre-suppose a condition of manners and general intercourse, which is Oriental, or which has passed away, or with which we have not been educated to sympathize. The allusion, the illustration, is interposed in the midst of the finest strains of devotion, and in passages of religious experience to which there would be a universal response, were not the effect somewhat marred, were not a dissonant chord struck by some expression which seems at least not in perfect keeping, and which possibly is somewhat repulsive This intervening thought does not accord with our ideas of propriety, or it occasions some break in the otherwise delightful flow of emotions.

But we forget that many of these compositions *must* have a local coloring, must betray the times, countries, state of society, in the midst of which they had their origin. Otherwise they would lose all verisimilitude. We should be deprived of all power of identifying them as genuine and trustworthy productions. Besides, we are not authorized to set up our peculiar predilections and antipathies as the unvarying standard for all nations and ages. There may be a beauty and pertinence in illustrating the glories of the Messiah's reign by an Oriental royal wedding, with all its gorgeous accompaniments, which *we* do not and can not perceive.

Another difficulty consists in the suddenness of the transitions. Light and darkness interchange with the utmost rapidity. Abruptness of emotion, an extraordinary vacillation in religious experience, characterize many of these productions. The most joyous and confident assurance is followed by waves of trouble. The deepest melancholy gives place in a moment to songs of thanksgiving. A Psalm opens with passionate expressions of love to the Almighty; it closes with what seems to be an unauthorized anathema on His enemies. The various passions which agitated the passionate worshiper, are sometimes expressed with a familiarity and boldness of tone, with which Christian experience in later times can not always accord, or at least *fully* sympathize. There is, too, an outward, and, as it were, a public manifestation of this feeling, which might, at first view, seem inconsistent with all retired and unobtrusive sensibilities. In the present state of society, in accordance with the methods of modern Christian culture, there are more uniformity of feeling, less violent outbursts of emotion, less striking alterations in the exercises of the soul. Or if the emotions do rise as high or sink as low, the changes are less obvious to inspection, or are restrained within narrower limits.

This difference may be owing in part to national temperament, or to the unbounded freedom with which men living in that age and quarter of the world expressed *all* their feelings. It may be in part owing also to a more checkered experience, to sudden and more violent reverses of Providence, to the more wonderful deliverances with which pious men were then favored. The difference may be also owing in a measure to our superficial feelings, our inability to comprehend the depth of the soul's emotions, our living under the control of artificial or conventional properties, where free utterance is not allowed to the thoughts; the restraint operating to diminish and dry up the very fountains of feeling.

Another reason why we do not receive the full practical impression which some of the Psalms are so fitted to produce is, that we do not read them as a whole, we do not find the key which unlocks the precious casket; we admit only the effect which detached verses or sentiments produce. We cast a glance on a massive pillar, on a beautiful cornice, on some adventitious decoration. We do not receive the impression which the great temple of truth, viewed as a whole, is so well fitted to make. The Psalm, though overflowing with emotion and sentiment, and characterized, perhaps, as among the noblest specimens of inspired song, has, notwithstanding, perfect unity; it is designed to produce one deep impression; all its parts are interwoven; all its elements form one distinct and beautiful whole. Contemplated by verses or detached ideas, it is contemplated only in fragments. We can not thus experience the effects which its author intended to produce. We stop at the first stage, but the regular gradations all terminate in the topmost and crowning stone. Because there is deep emotion or the highest imagination, there is not necessarily confusion of thought, or disconnected ideas. The composition may be bound together more completely than if it had the ordinary and obvious links. This is one reason why we should search the Scriptures, why we should not be satisfied with an indolent, desultory reading. We are to trace out the mind of the inspiring author; we are to follow those delicate threads and clews, invisible to the cursory reader; we are to toil up an ascent, perhaps steep and uninviting, till suddenly appears the vast field of truth, ravishing in its beauty, admirable in its proportions, and beyond whose distant horizon there seems to stretch away unknown and still brighter realms. Some of these thoughts, and others related to them, I wish to illustrate by a brief examination of the hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm; a composition among the most remarkable, on some accounts, in the collection; fraught with the loftiest conceptions of God, breathing profound and ardent devotion, uniting the most awakening thoughts with the most finished outward form, winged for the highest flight of the imagination, and yet conveying impressive practical lessons; a favorite hymn in the past ages of the Jewish and Christian Churches, and furnishing the germ of some of the most sublime lyric poems in all Christian languages.

"Jehovah! Thou hast searched me and known me;
Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising;
Thou understandest my thought afar off.
My path and my lying down Thou compassest,
And with all my ways art Thou acquainted.
For there is not a word in my tongue,
But lo! Jehovah, Thou knowest all of it.
Behind and before, Thou hast beset me
And layest upon me Thy hand.
Too wonderful is this knowledge for me,
It is high, I can not obtain unto it.
Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit?
And whither from Thy presence shall I flee?
Should I ascend the heavens, there Thou art;
And if I spread down hell as my couch,
Behold, Thou art there.
Should I take the wings of the morning
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
Even there Thy hand shall lead me,
And Thy right hand shall hold me;
And should I say, Darkness alone shall fall on me—
Even the night would be light about me;
Yea, the night as the day shineth.
As is the darkness, so the light.
For Thou hast created my reins,
Thou hast woven me in my mother's womb.
I will praise Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Marvelous are Thy works,
And that my soul knoweth right well.
Not hidden was my substance from Thee
When I was formed in secret,
And curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.
My body Thine eyes beheld,
And in Thy book all my days were enrolled;
My days were predetermined,
When there was not one of them!
And to me how precious are Thy thoughts, O God!
How great is the sum of them!
If I should count them,
They are more in number than the sand.
When I awake, then still I am with Thee!

Surely Thou wilt destroy, O God, the wicked!
Therefore, ye bloody men, depart from me.
For they speak against Thee wickedly,
And Thine enemies take Thy name in vain.
Those that hate Thee, Jehovah, do not I hate?
And those that rise up against Thee
Do not I abhor?
With perfect hatred I hate them,
For enemies I count them.
Search me, O God, and know my heart,
Try me, and know my thoughts;
And see if there be in me any evil way,
And lead me in the way everlasting."

On this Psalm I remark, in the first place, that the main thought, the binding sentiment, the key to the interpretation, is in the nineteenth and twenty-third verses. All which precedes the nineteenth verse may be considered as preparatory or converging to it. The Psalm has an immediately practical aim, which is unfolded near the close. It is not an abstract description of the Divine attributes, with a mere indirect purpose in view. If God is such a being, if His vital agency reaches over all His creation, pervades all objects, illumines the deepest and darkest recesses; if His knowledge has no limits, piercing into the mysterious processes of creation, into the smallest and most elemental germs of life; if His eye can discern the still more subtle and recondite processes of mind, comprehending the half-formed conception, the germinating desire "afar off;" if, anterior to all finite existence, His predetermining decree went forth; if in those ancient records of eternity, man's framework, with all its countless elements and organs, in all the ages of his duration, were inscribed—then for his servant, his worshiper on earth, two consequences follow, most practical and momentous; *first*, the ceasing to have or feel any complacency with the wicked, any sympathy witn their evil ways, any communion with them as such; and *secondly*, the earnest desire that God would search the Psalmist's soul, lest in its unsounded depths there might be some lurking iniquity, lest there might be, beyond the present jurisdiction of his conscience, some dark realm which the Omniscient eye only could explore. With the moral feelings of a Being whose scrutiny no subterfuge can evade, whose knowledge antedates that of all others, to whom there is nothing fathomless or dark in actual or in possible existence —with His moral feelings those of His servant should harmonize. There should be but one standard of character. The enemies of one should be the enemies of the other. The degree of moral disappropation should be proportionably as intense in the one case as in the other. Sympathy with men of blood, participation with those who take God's name in vain, would be, as it were, challenging His omniscience, and proving by one's conduct that the fate of the transgressor had been predestined as his fate. So, likewise, an earnest consideration of the all-pervading presence and all-comprehending knowledge of God, would lead every thoughtful man to the profoundest humility and self-distrust, and to the wish that the searching light of Heaven may explore all the dark corners of his soul.

My second remark on this Psalm is, that the thoughts are presented in a gradually ascending series. The illustrations rise in a beautiful progression. God's ubiquity and unlimited knowledge are first illustrated by outward and, as it were, tangible allusions; then by the wonderful processes of creation, which no eye can pierce; then by those eternal decrees which accurately delineated all the organic structures that were to come into being; and finally, by the climax and crowning wonder of all, God's goodness to His frail and humble servants on earth, His thoughts of love inestimably precious, more in number than the sands on the sea-shore.

Is it a matter of surprise, that our path and our lying-down are environed by this great Being; that in our walks we never can be solitary or alone; that, free and independent as we may feel, we are evermore pressed upon by a personal and conscious existence; that in the highest heavens He is no more present than He is in the profoundest abyss; that it is His power which wings the earliest beam of the morning, and His wisdom which guides it on its adventurous course; that in the night with its rayless gloom He walks as in the blaze of day? Do not be astonished at this; there are *greater* mysteries, "for Thou hast created my reins!" My bodily frame, fearfully and wonderfully made; that insipient organization, so faint, so minute, as to mock all investigation; that contexture so complicated; those threads so innumerable and so cunningly interwoven, animated by that impalpable breath, that subtle essence, which we call life—this is the most wonderful of all. Before this curious mechanism of Thine, the splendor of the morning and the solemn pomp of night fade away. Wrapped up within thee are mysteries higher than thou couldst find in heaven, deeper than thou couldst discover in hell. Travel not, even in thy wish, to the ends of the earth to see God's wisdom; it is nigh thee, in thine own frame, in thy breathing life. Thou carriest about with thee treasures of knowledge which science can never explore. Thou art in thyself a proof of Divine skill, which the heaven and the earth can not equal.

Yet be not astonished at this. All these wondrous existences, with their ten thousand elements, organs, and ramifications, did not come by chance. They were arranged from all eternity. The model, the plan, all the minute specifications, if we may so say, were present with the Architect, were perfectly known long before time began. In His book thy members were written in the unfathomable depths of a past eternity. This predetermining resolve, this delineating decree, was more astonishing than the power that executed it; the design more extraordinary than its accomplishment. God's consummate knowledge is shown, if possible, in greater perfection by the original conception than by the finishing act.

But more touching than all this stupendous knowledge, more impressive than all this unerring prescience, is the divine *compassion;* God's *thoughts* toward them that fear Him, overflowing with love, uncounted in number. The greatest wonder in God is His condescension. His philanthropy, His fatherly benignity, His yearning tenderness, is the crowning grace, is the thought which comprehends and exhausts all others.

I remark, in the third place, upon this Psalm, that it does not present the omnipresence and omniscience of God in their *sterner* aspects, as awful powers, primitive attributes, the consuming agents of the divine will. They are not placed in a cold and repelling light, as destined merely to fill the soul with fear of that Being that can wield such amazing resources. On the contrary, they are presented mainly in their winning and amiable forms, fitted to attract and soothe, rather than to terrify and confound.

If His faithful worshiper ascend the heavens, God is there to welcome him; if he plunge into the darkness of the profoundest abyss, God's benignant agency is felt even there. If duty call him to the extremest verge of the green earth, that same guiding hand accompanies him, that same watchful Friend sustains him. When he fears lest the floods may overwhelm him, or insupportable darkness fall upon him, still the everlasting arms are underneath him, and eternal light shines around him. When he awakes from a state of temporary unconsciousness, and fears lest his Guardian has retired into those depths where he can not trace Him, he still finds that Guardian at his side, with all powers of tender protection and support. How should it be otherwise? Inestimably dear are God's thoughts toward him! In all the stages of his being, in all his varied experience, from the dawn of life in helpless infancy onward, the Divine goodness has pursued him with unfaltering step; that goodness has lavished upon him its boundless stores; the divine perfections have been, as it were, conspiring to mark him out as the object of unceasing and exuberant favor.

From this Psalm various and impressive practical lessons may be learned.

One of the most obvious and direct inferences is this; that meditation upon God's character, the intellectual contemplation of His attributes, should lead us to self-review and humiliation. This practical effect should not be confined merely to what are termed His moral attributes. We may indeed consider abstractedly, and for scientific purposes, certain aspects of His nature, certain modes of His being, and denominate them natural or intellectual attributes. But in reality His being is one and indivisible. His nature is not separable into parts. All those states which we, on account of the imperfection of language, term qualities or characteristics, really coexist and cohere; they are very inadequate symbols to express a nature which is at once personal and boundless, a perfection whose moral and intellectual excellences can no more be separated than the exact edge or transition points in the colors of the rainbow. Such is the uniform representation of the Scriptures. They never teach us to gaze upon these attributes as intellectual propositions. The omniscience of God is a holy omniscience. The omnipresence of God is the presence of spotless holiness and infinite love. The power of God is the agent and executor of perfect holiness and righteousness. When, therefore, we look at any of the symbols of divine agency around us, the practical effect should be lowly adoration and the deepest self-abasement. The moon, walking in her brightness, is the teacher of moral purity. The stars in their courses, with sounds inaudible to our gross sense, whisper of the moral serenity of that Being who appointed them their circuits. The gorgeous apparitions in the western evening sky prefigure a realm whose pure light never fades away. All nature, all visible forms, all the wondrous mechanism of sky and earth, all the depths of our physical and immortal nature, speak not simply of abstract power and vast knowledge, nor simply of God's overflowing love, but, by the law of contrast, by one of the most active principles of our nature, they lead us to feel our own impurity, our own helplessness, the fearful uncongeniality of our nature to that of Him with whom we have to do. What are we, that we should be placed in the midst of such glories? Why should defilement mar Divine purity? Why should beings so corrupt, with hearts so inclined to evil, with eyes blind to the moral beauty that is lavished all around, be permitted to deface what they can not love and appreciate? "Search me and try my heart; by the cleansing power qualify me to live in a world radiant with the Divine perfections, to be an accepted worshiper in the pure temple, and to meditate thoughtfully on Thy uncreated glories!" This should be the spontaneous exclamation of every one who is permitted to turn aside and see this great sight.

Another remark on this Psalm is, that we discover in it a reason why a portion of inspiration is communicated to us in the form of poetry. It is not simply because it is more eloquent than prose, because figurative language makes a deeper and more vivid impression. It is because it gives a truer and more adequate impression, because it approaches nearer to the nature of the thing to be comprehended, because it is less liable to present false or perverted conceptions. The divine attributes are, in their nature, illimitable, and at the best can be but partially and feebly apprehended. Yet those delineations in the Scriptures are the most impressive, the most adequate, which are the furthest removed from the language of common life, where the illustrations are the least definite, the least measureable, the least apprehensible by the mere understanding; those objects in the material universe being selected which can be represented only, as it were, in outline, necessarily conveying the idea of an indefinite vastness, of an immeasurable depth, of unimagined velocity. There is a sense, therefore, in which the best method of representation is the most indefinite, the least cognizable by the mere intellect. We do not discover truth, we do not feel its power, by the aid of one faculty alone. For this purpose we have the principle of faith, we have the power of emotion, the faculty of imagination, all to be employed in some form or another, in addition to the light of reason, in obtaining some conceptions of Him whom to know is refreshment to the heart, support to the intellect, eternal life to the soul. The mercy of the Lord is from eternity to eternity; the high and the lofty One that inhabiteth eternity; whom the heaven of heavens can not contain; who reigneth clothed in majesty; who has been the dwelling-place of His servants in all generations; who walketh on the wings of the wind; whose Spirit garnished the heavens;—these and similar delineations, because of their indefiniteness, do actually impart the most ennobling and satisfying conceptions of God. On such subjects, that which is in the highest degree poetical is nearest the truth. Hence the Psalm which we have been considering is one of the principal proof-passages for two or three of the attributes of the Almighty. Hence a main reason why the Hebrews, and all who have enjoyed their poetry, sublimer beyond comparison than any other, have attained to the purest and most spiritual conceptions of God.

I remark, again, that this subject is in the highest degree of a practical character. The attributes of God—His omnipresence and omniscience, seem to be far away from us, to have little vital connection with our daily habits of thought and feeling. Yet they are attributes fruitful of application, topics overflowing with instruction.

We need such themes to correct the levity, the frivolous indifference which is so natural to us, the tendency to a superficial and conventional life, by which one is robbed of his birthright as a serious and meditative student in the vast field of religious truth. The frequent contemplation of those attributes would ennoble the mind, would divest it of its degrading trivialities, would impart to it a wholesome awe, would gradually reveal to it somewhat of the closeness and preciousness of the relations in which its stands to its Creator and Redeemer.

Again, the longer one lives, provided his mental and moral habits are in any measure correct, the more will he feel the depth of his ignorance, the more will he see that he has as yet caught only a glimpse of the fragments of truth, the less confidently will he speak of the certainty of his knowledge, the profounder will be his consciousness that immeasurable tracts lie beyond his feeble ken, and the more earnestly will he ask for that illuminating spirit that searcheth the dark things of God, the more grateful will he be that there is an open door to One, in whom dwelleth all the fullness of wisdom.

Again, are we at any time solitary? Are we following the path of duty in the furthest East, or the utmost West, where the sun gilds Indian mountains, or his setting beam flames on the Pacific isles? Are we surrounded by untutored men, whom we are trying to lead to the truth as it is in Jesus, and between whom and ourselves there can be but little communion? How refreshing may be the thought that we are not withdrawn from the sovereign intelligence, that the very circumstances of our solitariness may widen and shorten the channel of communication between us! Our souls may find a *present* God as it would be impossible in a Christian land. The everlasting arms may be around us in a sense never felt elsewhere.

So it may be in times of affliction, when the vanity of all earthly supports is felt as a most melancholy reality; then the soul, detached from all other relief, may still sing, The Lord is my refuge, I shall not want;—I will praise Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;—made immortal and spiritual like Thee; made to sustain conscious and most endearing relations to Thee made; wise by Thine unsearchable wisdom; made happy in Thine immediate presence; and destined to an everlasting progress toward that great luminary, the faint irradiations of whose love now, in this distant world, are my song in my pilgrimage.

DISCOURSE EIGHTIETH.

ALBERT B. DOD, D.D.

Professor Dod was born at Medham, Morris Co., New Jersey, March 24th, 1805. His early studies were pursued at the Academy in his native village, and at Elizabethtown, whither his parents had removed. He graduated at Princeton College in 1822, and spent the next five years in private teaching. In 1827 he returned to Princeton, entering the Theological Seminary, and at the same time acting as tutor in the College. Upon the completion of his theological course, in 1830, he was elected to the chair of mathematics in Princeton College. He also lectured for some time on Architecture (for which he had a peculiar passion), and on Political Economy. Besides this, and performing the duties of his department, he often preached, and contributed largely to the pages of the "Biblical Repertory," or Princeton Review. Many of his articles, particularly one on Capital Punishment, and a review of the "Vestiges of Creation," were considered exceedingly able and conclusive. But his brilliant career was soon to close. The good fight of faith was not to be prolonged. On the 20th of November, 1845, he was summoned from the field of conflict and permitted "to hang up his armor in the Master's hall, and take his crown." His remains now sleep in classic ground, at the feet of Samuel Davies.

Professor Dod was for eighteen years a distinguished ornament of the faculty of instruction in the venerable College at Princeton. As a scholar, he was far in advance of most men at his age; as a Christian he was pre-eminently a follower of Jesus Christ; and as a man of talents he had few superiors. It was the testimony of one who had every opportunity of knowing him (Professor Charles Hodge, D.D.), that he was undoubtedly one of the ablest men New Jersey has ever produced. "His intellect," says this authority, "was so clear in its perceptions, so vigorous and so rapid in its action, that he saw, as by intuition, what ordinary minds attain only by laborious examination." There was also a remarkable blending of the several powers of the mind. "Never," said one at the time of his death, "did I know an instance in which the *imagination* and *judgment* were combined in such vast proportions—

"'Where fancy halted, weary in her flight,
In other men, his, fresh as morning, rose,
And soared untrodden heights, and seemed at home
Where angels bashful looked.'"*

As a teacher, the genius of Professor Dod enkindled the enthusiasm of all who came under his instructions, and made him eminent in his profession. As a champion for the truth, he was earnest, able and successful. All his shining gifts and attainments were laid at the feet of Jesus. He appeared before the public much more frequently as a literary and scientific man than as a preacher. But when speaking from the pulpit he never failed to command the most marked attention, and fix deep in the mind the truth under discussion. He especially excelled in the clear presentation of the great *practical* truths of the Christian religion. Of this remark we have an illustration in the sermon here given, which Dr. Hodge has pronounced one of Professor Dod's ablest discourses. It has never before been printed, and now appears, at our request, through the kindness of a brother of the deceased, the Rev. William A. Dod, of Princeton. The subject discussed is one of great importance, and the discourse bears the marks of that acute intellect, exquisite taste, clear analysis, and perspicuity of statement, for which the author was distinguished.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MAN FOR HIS BELIEF.

"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death."—PROVERBS, xiv. 12.

The chief concern, and the most earnest effort of every rational being, ought to be directed to the discovery of the right way through life. With a heart naturally disposed to error, and surrounded by influences which conspire to deceive and mislead him, no man can hope to avoid ruinous and fatal mistakes, but by the continued exercise of the greatest watchfulness and care. The paths that lead to destruction are many and broad; they stand wide open on every side of us; it requires no search to find, it costs no effort to enter them. But the single way that leads to life eternal, is so strait, and narrow, and difficult, that few there be that find it. All who do not search diligently after it are sure to miss it; and what is still more alarming, many shall seek to enter in and shall not be able. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death." It is possible that the search after truth may be so conducted as to end only in error; that the firmest conviction of right may lead down to the chambers of death, and that a fixed assurance of safety may buoy up the heart, until the moment when it is transfixed by the pangs of the second death.

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* Rev. Irænius Prime, D.D.

This is unquestionably a most appalling truth. The man who is traveling an intricate and dangerous road, though he have the unperverted use of all his faculties, and adequate means for determining the right way, is in a situation sufficiently alarming to task his utmost caution. But how much more deplorable his condition if he be liable to be smitten with blindness, or, worse still, to have his eyes so disordered as to misread every guide-post that marks his way, and his ears so perverted as to convert the sharp calls of warning that sound around him, into the bland assurances of safety.

Even thus perilous is the situation of man in relation to his eternal destiny. Endowed by God with moral faculties capable of discerning the right way, and furnished with abundant means of information, he may so pervert the one, and neglect and abuse the other, as to become involved in fatal delusions. With an elastic step and a cheerful heart, without any fearful misgivings as to his course, he may be traveling the road to destruction, and learn his mistake only when it is too late to rectify it. Error may steal upon him under the guise of truth. Wrong may assume to him the appearnce of right; and evil be conscientiously pursued as good.

Such is the doctrine taught in our text, and abundantly confirmed by other declarations of the Scriptures. We read of those whom a deceived heart hath turned aside; who have turned the light that was within them into darkness, and who, because they loved not the truth, have been given over to strong delusions that they should believe a lie. The opinions which men entertain on moral subjects are never treated in the Scriptures as a matter of indifference; nor are they exempted from responsibility for the errors by which they are misled. On the contrary the Bible frequently teaches and always assumes, that a right practice has its foundation only in a right belief; that goodness can not exist independent of the truth, and that every man is accountable for his opinions, no less than for his outward conduct.

The Bible is on this, as on many other subjects, directly opposed to the maxims and opinions most current in the world Who has not met with the trite lines of the poet,

"For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight,
His can't be wrong, whose *life* is in the right."

Who has not heard it said, with the air of confidence befitting a self-evident axiom, "It is no matter what a man believes, so that his practice be right?" How common is it for the most palpable and egregious errors to be excused under the soft plea "that they who hold them are sincere in their belief;" as if hypocrisy were the only vice of which man is capable. It has been proclaimed to the world as a great, a glorious truth, by one of the most distinguished among modern orators and statesmen, that men are no more responsible for their opinions than for the height of their stature, or the hue of their skin! The same sentiment has found its way into professed treatises on morals—it has been spread abroad on the pages of our popular reviews. Poetry has embellished it with its charms, and sophistry defended it by plausible arguments. We have even heard it drop from the lips of Christian people, who did not seem to be aware that the truth of the sentiment they were uttering is consistent only with the falsehood of the religion they profess.

If this sentiment were intended to apply only in limitation of man's responsibility to his fellow-man for his opinions, we should have no quarrel with it. It is true that man is answerable for his faith before no human tribunal. This truth has in these latter days sounded abroad through the world, and the fires of persecution have gone out before it, and the rusted implements of torture are now hung up as the curious relics of a past age. That age can not return. Never again can the rack be employed as an instrument of conviction, or crowds assemble to laugh and exalt over the obstinate believer slowly consuming at the stake. But I hesitate not to say that better, yea far better, would it be for the world, that these detestible barbarities of religious zeal should be renewed, than that men should be guarded against them by being taught to believe that most monstrous of all errors, that error itself has no noxious quality, and truth no holy prerogative. The return of the days of persecution for opinion's sake, would expose us to the mischievous consequences of a single error—the general prevalence of the sentiment under discussion, would open the flood-gates to all forms of error, and among others to the very one which it aims to prevent. For if all error be blameless, then may men *innocently* believe that they ought to persecute with fire and sword all who differ from them in opinion.

But it is not necessary to free men from responsibility to God, to prevent the danger of persecution from man. Human law traverses but a small portion of that vast field which is covered, in every part, by the dominion of God. It has no right to intermeddle with any of our opinions or feelings, nor even to control any of our outward acts, except so far as these are injurious to the peace and well-being of society. This evident limitation of the right of man over his fellow-man, is the proper ground on which to rest the freedom of opinion. Here is ample room afforded to every one, when called in question for his opinions, either by a magistrate or by an intermeddling neighbor, to reply, "What is that to thee? to my own Master I stand or fall."

It is plain that error may be thus excused before every human tribunal, or rather exempted from its jurisdiction, upon grounds which leave untouched the question of its accountableness before the judgment-seat of God.

But the advocates for the innocence of error plead for it upon principles, which exempt it from Divine, no less than human jurisdiction.

"A human being," they tell us, "can only be supposed accountable for those actions which are influenced by his will. But belief is entirely distinct from, and unconnected with volition. It is the apprehension of the agreement or disagreement of the ideas which compose any proposition. The mind can only *believe* according to evidence. The will has no more power to withhold the assent of the mind from a proposition proved to be true, than it has to prevent the sensation of sight when an object is placed before the eyes. Belief is an involuntary state of mind, and as volition is essential to merit or demerit, it can not be the proper object either of praise or blame." Such is the substance of the arguments urged in behalf of the opinion under discussion: and if these principles are correct, it certainly follows, not only that man can not be rightfully called upon to account to *man* for his belief, but also that he has no such account to render to *God*.

It can not be denied, and by some of its adversaries it is not concealed, that the opinion as thus stated and defended, is at direct variance with the Scriptures. The contrariety between them is so direct and palpable, that the adoption of the one necessarily implies the rejection of the other. The Bible purports to be a messenger to us from God, revealing His will and our duty; and the prophets and apostles who come to us charged with the delivery of this message, uniformly command us to receive it as the truth of God. They do not confine themselves to the exhibition of the evidence which illustrates and proves the truth of their doctrines; they do not content themselves with simply recommending the doctrines which they teach, as worthy of credit and beneficial in their tendency; but they distinctly command us, in the name and by the authority of God, to believe and obey their words. "This is the commandment of God, that we believe on the name of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

They deliver their message as an authoritative exposition of the truth—and instead of teaching that it may be rejected by any without guilt, they declare that the direst penalties will overtake all who dare to disbelieve. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." "He that believeth not shall be damned."

So far are they from teaching that belief is an involuntary and therefore an irresponsible operation of mind, that they represent it as the very criterion of moral character. Thus our Saviour said to the Pharisees, "The publicans and harlots shall enter into the kingdom of heaven before you, for ye believed not John the Baptist—but the publicans and harlots believed him." If the responsibility of man for his belief were a remote inference from the other plain doctrines of the Holy Scriptures, we might suppose it doubtful, however clear the reasoning might appear which seemed to establish it. If it flashed upon us only dimly here and there as we turned the pages of the Bible, we might question its real import; but it shines through every page from beginning to end with a light too clear and steady to be mistaken. Whether the doctrine itself be true or false, right or wrong, may be matter of dispute—but it can not be doubted that it is the doctrine of the Bible—nay, that it is one of the foundation truths upon which Christianity rests. If this be removed, the whole system must fall.

I shall attempt, therefore, to show that the declarations of the Bible upon this subject, are in strict harmony with the course of Divine Providence in the world—and with the laws of right and wrong written upon our hearts.

If sincerity of belief is all that is required for our future well-being, we should naturally expect to find the same law prevailing in the administration of that government under which we now live. It should, in this case, be matter of surprise to us that a man who is *honestly mistaken*, should ever suffer any ill consequences because of his error. And yet what is more evident than that the well-being of every man in this life, is dependent upon his knowledge and belief of the truths which preside over his earthly lot, and determine the conditions of his failure or success? The laws which govern the course of human events have a real outward existence, independent of the conceptions which we form of them—and it is not upon the sincerity, but the *correctness* of our belief in them, that our happiness or misery is dependent. It is not so much a deduction of reason, as it is a fact of experience, that men are actually punished in this life for the errors of judgment into which they are, from whatever cause, betrayed. If through inattention, want of due reflection, or mere willfulness, they are led to adopt erroneous opinions respecting the conduct of life, they never fail to reap the ill consequences of their error. This truth is daily exemplified before our eyes—and he is a happy man whose own experience does not furnish him with many luminous illustrations of it. There is no man who has not learned that his own convictions have no tendency to alter the substantial nature of things around him, or to suspend, or modify, in the least degree, the operation of those laws to which he has been made subject. These remain the same, retaining their intrinsic properties, and working out their predestined results without any influence from the mutable opinions of man. Though all men should believe that the earth is fixed in space, as it appears to the sense, this belief would not stay for a moment her swift motion in her orbit. The ancient philosopher who had persuaded himself that there was no external world, that these solid seeming realities around us, are but appearances or phantasms of the perceiving mind, and who in this account refused to get out of the way of what seemed to be a carriage coming toward him, was crushed to death, notwithstanding the sincerity and strength of his conviction that there was no danger. He who should swallow poison under the firm belief that it was wholesome food, would nevertheless find in death the penalty of his mistake.

Does not the drunkard often continue to drain the deadly cup, on the ground that it is necessary for his health? But when was it ever found that this belief stayed the tremulousness of his hand, the bloating of his body, the wateriness of his eye, and the other signals which suffering nature holds out, of present distress and approaching dissolution?

It must be evident to every man that we are placed in this world under the dominion of laws, that coming from some higher source than ourselves, remain fixed and immutable: that there are certain truths easily discoverable, the knowledge of which is absolutely essential to our existence—and that there are other truths, more difficult of discovery, which we must know in order to gain the highest good which is here within our reach. All things have been so arranged as to hold out a boon for extensive and accurate knowledge, and to discourage ignorance and error under the severest penalties of forfeiture and suffering. Under this aspect it is apparent that the life we now lead is a life of faith. The knowledge and belief of the truth, is its vital principle.

Behold here the admirable harmony between the relation which we see that we hold to the present life, and that which the Bible reveals as connecting us with the life to come. Here is this world with its sensible realities placed over against us—and it is upon the correctness and apprehension of our belief of the pre-established truths which are necessary to bring us into correspondence with it, that our happiness, or misery, is dependent. In like manner Revelation assures us that there lies before us another world, where the intrinsic nature of every object is as independent of our perceptions, as here, and in which our condition will be determined by our belief or rejection of those truths which are necessary to our well-being. Can there be a doubt that it is the voice of the same Being that speaks to us in the Bible, and in nature?

Certain it is, that whatever objection lies against the Bible because of its teaching the hard doctrine, that man is responsible for his belief, lies with equal, nay, with greater force, against the notion of a just and benevolent Creator. For we not only find in our experience that this doctrine is reduced to practice as an actual law, governing our relation to the present world, but we find it enforced with a strictness of rule and a severity of application which are not claimed for it in the Bible. In the administration of the affairs of the present life, ignorance and error are visited with suffering, even in cases where they are strictly unavoidable. The man who, through his unfavorable circumstances or the feebleness of his natural faculties, is unable to arrive at the knowledge of the truths which might benefit him, is doomed no less than he who willfully rejects this knowledge, to undergo the penalties and calamities which are inseparable from ignorance. This seeming hardship doubtless admits of explanation—but explain it as you will, it still remains a fact, that in the dispensation of the rewards and punishments of this life, man is actually held to a closer responsibility for his belief, than we charge him with in relation to another world.

If there be any here who are disposed to venture the salvation of their soul upon the opinion that truth is of no importance except in the sense of sincerity, let me warn them to make proof of the efficacy of this opinion upon the world around them. Persuade yourself that poison has no noxious property—and see whether this persuasion will deprive it of its deadly character. Take a viper to your bosom under the conviction that it is harmless and see whether this conviction will extract or blunt its sting! Teach yourself to believe that industry is not necessary to success in life, and see whether this belief will shield you from the insignificance and privations which follow in the train of indolence!

If the real, substantial nature of things here, remains unchanged by your opinions, what right have you to suppose that the realities of another world will be more flexible? If error here is always attended by calamitous results, upon what safe ground can you judge that it will be harmless there? Reflect thoughtfully upon this subject—and you will find in the observation and experience of every day, abundant reason to fear, that there is a way that seemeth right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

You may derive further confirmation of this alarming truth, from an inspection of your own nature.

It is evident that the happiness of man was intended to be derived chiefly from his own internal dispositions. External circumstances are but secondary and inferior sources of enjoyment or suffering. In the heart itself is hid the secret fountain which refreshes or saddens us with its sweet or bitter waters. We can conceive of a heart so filled with pure affections, so informed with knowledge and strengthened with love, so thoroughly fortified by acquiescence

"In the will Supreme
For time and for eternity; by Faith,
Faith absolute in God, including Hope,"

and the defense that lies in boundless love of his perfections, that the darts of anguish, though they may strike upon that heart and wound it, can not fix a rankle there. Upon the ruin of all its expectations such a heart may gaze with subdued calmness—through all the disasters of life it may pass untroubled, or at least,

"With only such degree of sadness left,
As may support longings of pure desire;
And strengthen love, rejoicing secretly,
In the sublime attractions of the grave."

So, too, we can conceive of a heart so weak that it can withstand the presence of no external evil—so ignorant that, in the blank and solitude of things, it is robbed of all enjoyment—so depraved that in the midst of all external advantages it is preyed upon by hatred, malice, envy, and all disturbing passions; it is within the compass of moral excellence to produce the one of these states—and the other does not transcend the capabilities of vice. The obvious tendency of virtue, in whatever degree it be cultivated, is to produce happiness; and vice, by an equally obvious and indissoluble connection, is the parent of misery. The man who disobeys his reason, or violates his conscience, in his search after happiness, grasps at a good at the expense of the very appetite which is to relish it. To injure his moral nature is to waste and wear away his only capability of happiness. If we take the constitution of man to pieces, as we would a watch or other piece of mechanism, to ascertain the object for which it was constructed, we see evident marks in every part that virtue was the end for which its Maker designed it. And if we then inquire further, how this end is to be gained, that is, how men are to become virtuous, we find equally strong reasons for concluding that it can only be through a belief of the truth. The essence of virtue consists in its principle; and every moral principle has its root in truth. Error may be productive of some partial and transient good, as when a crying child is stilled, or a refractory one frightened into obedience, by a belief in some nursery fiction: but no one doubts that this trivial good is purchased at a lamentable sacrifice. Every honest man knows that whenever he uses deception and falsehood to promote even a good end, he is sacrificing the law of reason to the dictates of a low and short-sighted policy, and that he gains his end only as he would gain the sword which he should purchase with the loss of the arm that is to wield it. Truth is the only agency by which a principle of good can be implanted and nourished, in our own hearts, or in others. It is as inseparable from virtue as virtue itself is from happiness. In all our modes of education, and our attempts to improve the character of individuals or communities, we proceed upon this principle. We never think of working a permanent good in any other way than by instilling the truth; nor do we ever dream that error would answer our purpose equally well, if we could only succeed in making it pass for truth. Any man would spurn the shameless effrontery of the scorner, who should tell him that the good of society and of its individual members, would be equally well promoted by teaching them to lie, and steal, and murder, provided we could only persuade them that these things were right. That men can be elevated in their moral character, or in any way benefitted by being taught to receive error as truth, is as monstrous an absurdity and as palpable a contradiction to all the lessons of experince, as can be conceived. Man is so made as to be swayed to good only by the Truth. His moral nature can not respond to any other influence.

If we have not misinterpreted the nature of man, we have, then, in his structure, not a presumption merely, but an indubitable proof of his responsibility for his belief. His happiness, whether in this world or the next, must depend upon his own moral character—and this character can be framed and molded to good only through the inward workings of truth upon his heart. If any preparation of heart be necessary to fit man for dwelling in the presence of a holy God, and rejoicing in the intuition of this glory, he can obtain it only through the belief of such truths as are fitted to work within him the transformation needed. To assert that sincerity will give to error the transforming efficacy of truth, is to give the lie to our own nature no less distinctly than to the Bible. Look into your own hearts, my hearers, and you will find there, in its manifest adaptations to the truth, strong reasons for placing your faith in that revelation which is distinguished from all other books pretending to Divine inspiration, by its frequent and strong recommendations of truth—which exalts truth as the crown, and honor, and glory of a man, and lays it upon him as one of its most sacred duties, to seek after it as for hid treasure, and which represents the perfection and final bliss of the glorified spirit as a direct aspect and intuitive beholding of truth in its pure and immutable Source. And you will at the same time learn to reject the dangerous tolerance which looks with equal regard, or rather with equal indifference upon all opinions, principles, and persuasions; which is utterly careless toward all truth; which could join with equal satisfaction in the becoming and reverent solemnities of Christian worship, or in the imposture, lust, and blood of heathen orgies; which recognizes no difference between the truths which teach the Christian widow to turn her eye from the corpse of her husband, upward to his and her Redeemer, and then devote herself to rearing with pious care the children who henceforth are to her as flowers blooming upon the father's grave, and the remorseless creed which goads the disconsolate victim to burn on the funeral pile of her husband, leaving the orphan pledges of their love to struggle with the hardships from which a parent's care should have shielded them. Such tolerance can come only from the unthinking and senseless cant of fashion, or the deadly narcotic of moral and religious indifference. It proceeds upon an assumption which is false in fact, and dishonoring alike to the reason of man, and the truth of God. It is impossible that a soul into which this viperous error has crept should avoid being benumbed, paralyzed, and destroyed by its subtile poison.

The argument, thus far, has attempted to establish it as a truth, that man is responsible for his belief, from the fact that he is actually held thus responsible in the affairs of this life, and from the consideration that his constitution has been so formed as to render it impossible that error, however sincerely believed, could subserve for him the beneficial purposes and ends of truth.

We see, with our bodily eyes, that error is actually attended by suffering in the present life. From the day in which Eve, beguiled by the tempter, believed that the forbidden fruit was good for food, and to be desired to make one wise, until now, no one has ever listened to the serpent voice of error, without suffering, in some degree, from its serpent fang. Behold, in this, the decision of the question under discussion, at the bar of Divine providence.

And again, we find that the moral nature of man, which contains within it the springs of his well-being, has been so constituted that it is inaccessible to any other influence for good than that which dwells in the truth—and that, as our conceptions have no tendency to alter the real nature of truth and error, or transmute their intrinsic qualities, the good or ill effect of our belief must of necessity depend, not upon the sincerity of our convictions, but upon their correspondence with absolute truth. The heart from which bitter waters are welling up has been so made that it can be sweetened only by the leaves of truth. You may cast into this fountain other branches, but you will find, in the end, that instead of purifying its waters, you have only depraved the appetite which tastes them.

Behold, in this, the decision of the same question by our Creator, in the day when He said "Let us make man in our own image."

And here, having gathered up the concurrent testimony of Nature, Providence, and Grace—of our Creator, our Ruler, and our Redeemer—all declaring, in no doubtful terms, that man is accountable for his belief, we might safely leave the matter.

But I may be called upon to vindicate the justice of this doctrine, as well as to establish its truth. This opens a wide field into which we can now enter only for the purpose of laying down, as briefly as may be, the principles which are to guide the investigation.

It is contended that the doctrine which we maintain contradicts our elementary notions of right, since belief is an involuntary operation of mind, and volition is essential to merit or demerit. The principles upon which this objection rests, contain, like all dangerous error, enough of the semblance of truth to make them deceptive. No lie can be dangerous unless it be the ghost of some truth. But it is not difficult, in this case, to detect and expose the fallacy. It is true that volition is a necessary constituent of the morality of all our outward acts, because, without a preceding determination of the will, they would not be *our* acts. So far, the principle is true. Its fallacy lies in extending the same law to our internal affections. It is not true, that any distinct act of the will is necessary to impart the character of morality to an internal state or disposition of heart. For the proof of this I need only to refer you to the testimony of your own consciousness. You can not resist the conviction that you are responsible for the feelings which prevail within you, no less, nay more, than for the outward acts to which they lead. Nor can you have failed to observe that these feelings rise and fall, come and depart, often without any direct action of your will upon them. You hate one man, and you love another—not because you have, by an act of will, called these affections into being, but because you have received in their respective characters those qualities which are fitted to awaken these different feelings. You hate that which seems to you hateful, and you love that which appears lovely; and no act of the will can impart these qualities to the objects which appeal to your affections. It is contended that belief can not possess any moral character, because, when we have arrived at the end of any proposition, we can not help deciding according to the evidence before us. An act of the will can not add to the evidence on either side, any more convincing efficacy than intrinsically belongs to it.

But is not this equally true of our affections? Where any object is presented to the affections, can an act of the will change its apparent qualities so as to make that lovely which is intrinsically adapted to excite our aversion? The consciousness of every man tells him that he can not help loving that which seems to him lovely, any more than he can help believing that which seems to him true, and that his will has no more power to change the qualities which excite his affections, than it has to alter the evidence which controls his belief. If, then, his affections possess a moral character, which no one denies, why may not his belief? If it do not, it must be for some better reason than its independence of volition.

But it will be said that our affections, though not directly under the control of volition, are nevertheless voluntary. The exercise of them is the spontaneous acting out of our nature; it is with the consent and concurrence of all our active powers.

In this sense of the word, we admit that no act or state of the mind can merit either praise or blame unless it be voluntary; and, in this sense of the word, we deny that the belief of moral truth is an involuntary operation of mind. The belief of truths that are accompanied by demonstrative evidence possesses, we admit, no more moral character than an act of perception. The mind comes to its decision under the same kind of necessity that compels us to see an object when placed before our eyes.

But the case is evidently different with moral truths. Here, too, the belief must be according to the evidence perceived, but the convincing power of this evidence, like the attractive qualities of the objects that address our affections, depends upon the moral state of the heart. If it be urged here that the responsibility ought, in this case, to be shifted from the erroneous belief to the wrong state of heart from which it proceeds, I answer that I can see no reason for this transfer which would not apply with equal force to induce us, in many cases, to make a similar transfer from one affection or act to the belief which led to it. Suppose a man, under the influence of avarice, to wish, in the first instance, for the death of some one, whose death would be his gain; and then to bring himself to the conviction that it was right for him to remove him; and then to perpetrate the murderous deed;—why should we, in this case, charge the criminality of his wrong conviction upon the avarice which prompted it, rather than the sin of the murder upon the antecedent persuasion that it was right for him to commit it? I know of no principle by which we can select any one of this series of acts, and say, "Here lies all the blame." The avarice was wrong, the murderous wish was wrong, the erroneous belief was wrong, and the assassin-blow was wrong. The wrong conviction was as voluntary a state of mind as the criminal passion, in the only sense in which voluntariness is essential to accountability.

Men judge thus habitually, in all matters where religion is not in question. They would not hesitate to condemn the man who should avow his belief that it was right for him to steal or commit murder, and you could hardly put a plainer affront upon their moral sense, than by telling them that the man ought to be held free from all blame until he has carried his belief out into act. The Bible is, in this respect, so far from contradicting our natural sentiments of right, that it harmonizes exactly with them. The voice of conscience joins with the voice of God in condemning all erroneous belief which arises from a corrupt state of heart.

The only question, then, for debate in connection with this subject, is whether the truth which is declared to be necessary for our salvation is accompanied with sufficient evidence to satisfy every rightly-disposed mind. This question I shall not now discuss, but content myself with referring you, when you ought to be content to receive your answer, to the decision of Him who made the human mind, and who knows what degree of evidence is necessary to fix upon it the responsibility of error. The Bible affirms that the rejection of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, or the perversion of its truths, can have its origin only in an evil heart, and is therefore a proper and just reason for God's condemning sentence. "He that believeth on the Son of God is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil."

Let me then, in conclusion, urge you, my hearers, as you value the purity and salvation of your souls, to study, revere, love, and obey the truth. And the truth shall make you free; free from the thralldom of corrupt desires and passions; free to rise above the tumults and cares of this lower world; free to look upon the face of Jesus and call Him your Friend and Brother; free to partake of the Divine nature and drink of the river of God's pleasures.

But remember, too, that if holiness is dependent upon truth, your power of perceiving the truth is no less dependent upon your purity of heart. Every evil affection pours its bedimming vapors around your understanding; every sin you commit blunts your power of moral perception, and involves you in danger of error. And if you continue willfully to sin, after you have received the knowledge of the truth, the light that God has given you will go out in darkness, and sparks of your own kindling will encompass you, and light you on your path to destruction. You shall lose your way, but you will think yourself right: your feet shall stumble upon the dark mountains, but you will fancy yourself walking in a smooth or level path; thick clouds shall gather over you, but to your eye they will take the form of the castle and battlements of heaven; until at length your wanderings shall bring you to the verge of this world, and the awful plunge awake you to truth and to misery. "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Sketch of the Welsh Pulpit.

THE WELSH PULPIT.

There is reason to believe that from the earliest times Christianity has existed in Wales. It is even claimed that Claudia, who was converted under Paul's ministry, was a native of Wales, and that coming from Rome in the year 63, she scattered the "seed of the kingdom" in her own country. A little more than a century later, Faganus and Daminicanus, who also had been converted in Rome, began to preach to their countrymen in Wales; and through their preaching, Lucius the king, was brought to embrace Christianity. Under the reign of Diocletian, the Welsh Christians suffered much from persecution; and many were put to death. Subsequent disasters threatened the entire extinction of the Christian religion; but through the labors of Gildas, Dyfrig, Dynawt, Teil, Padran, Pawlin, and others, it survived among the hills of Cumrey. The Welsh resisted the encroachments of popery in the seventh century, and more than a thousand, many of whom were ministers, suffered in the struggle. But the adherents of the true faith were overcome, and, driven to the mountains, we hear nothing of them till the time of the Reformation.

About the year 1385, Walter Brute, a disciple of Wickliffe, returned from Oxford where he had been pursuing his studies, and commenced the work of reform among his countrymen in Wales. Preaching in the streets, in the houses, and in the markets, he soon became a noted reformer; and great was his success. Although severely persecuted, and once tried for heresy, he triumphed over his accusers, and was cheered by the conversion to his views of several of the Romish clergy. Revivals occurred in the cloisters, and not a few monks came forth to proclaim against popery; while on every hand the Lord made his work to progress. In 1580, John Penry, an Episcopal minister, dissented from the Established Church, and became a Baptist. He was a man of liberal education and of fine talents; and became widely popular as a preacher. After prosecuting his ministry with great success for more than seven years, he died a martyr. He is said to have been the first Baptist minister in Wales after the Reformation. In 1620, Erbury and Worth followed the example of Penry, and preached with wonderful unction and effect. In 1635 they were ejected from their parishes; but, nothing daunted, they went from valley to valley, and mountain to mountain, preaching the word, and organizing churches.

During the ministry of Erbury and Worth, arose "that morning star of the Baptist churches in Wales"—Vavasor Powell. He was a man of great eloquence and power; and thousands pressed to his ministry, many of whom were converted to Christ. Under the fearful persecutions of Charles II. of England, when the Baptists of Wales suffered beyond description, Powell was cast into thirteen different prisons. He died in 1670. Cotemporary with him, were many faithful laborers in Wales, among whom were John Myles, and the noted Roger Williams, who afterward came to America. After the death of Powell and his coadjutors, the work of God declined, and for a century made but little or no progress. It was by the trumpet-tongued eloquence of Charles Bala, "the apostle of North Wales," and of Howell Harris, and Lewis Rees, and Daniel Rowlands, and William Williams, and others, in the time of Wesley and Whitfield, that the churches were again aroused and some of the most blessed revivals ever known, took place. Great were the zeal and activity of these men, and everywhere the hand of the Lord was revealed with power, through the preaching of the word. Shortly afterward the celebrated Christmas Evans appeared, and by his eloquence and zeal, awakened a profound sensation throughout the principality. Along with his, stand many names worthy to be had in remembrance; such as David Charles and John Elias, and Williams of Wern, and Samuel Breeze, and T. Jones, and E. Jones, and Titus Lewis, and Benjamin Davies, and Jas. Harris, and D. Evans, and M. Thomas, and J. Jenkins, and J. Davis, and Morris Jones, and Rees Jones, and many others, of whom it has been said that every one of them was a host.

These men formed a constellation of preachers in Wales, during the first quarter of the present century, such as has scarcely been excelled in any country or time. They were nearly all self-made men, and men of prayer, and of faith, whose earnest, affectionate, and glowing utterances went with power to the hearts of the multitudes who hung upon their lips. Their names and labors, however, seldom reached beyond their own loved hills and valleys, and posterity must content itself with very few written accounts concerning their pious deeds, and still fewer of their pulpit productions. At their death they left few successors in the ministry, of equally brilliant talents; but yet there are few countries where the pulpit exerts a more powerful influence than in Wales. Of this, the religious habits of the people are a sufficient proof. It has often been remarked that there is nothing in England, or in any other country, to compare with the religious life of this remarkable people. The leading religious denominations in Wales, are the Calvinistic Methodists, the Baptists, the Independents, and the Wesleyan Methodists. There are also some smaller religious denominations. The relative number of preachers, we are not able to give, owing to the want of reliable statistics. From the last census of Great Britain, it appears that there are eight hundred twenty-eight places of worship (and probably about this number of ministers), occupied by the Calvinistic Methodists. There are nearly four hundred Baptist churches, and about the same number of ministers.

The pulpit of Wales exhibits many striking peculiarities. Preaching partakes of the natural characteristics of the people; which characteristics seem to be impressed by the surrounding material objects and the face of the country. The crag, the cliff, and the lonely glen; the heath, the lake, and the mountain; the "mist rolling up the hill-side, the mournful gust sweeping over its brow, and the thundering brawl of the cataract," are objects with which the people of Wales are familiar from their birth. Add to this that they are of Celtic origin, and, therefore, highly impressible, and in love with the imaginative, the gorgeous, and the poetic, and we are prepared to anticipate the leading characteristics of Welsh preaching—not depth, argument, method—but warmth, imagery, comparison, illustration, and passionate appeal.

The following outline of the prominent features of the Welsh pulpit, is condensed from an interesting sketch, found in the "Life of Rev. William Williams," of Wern, by Rev. James Rhys Jones. It is especially applicable to the highest order of Welsh preachers.

Self-possession is a striking characteristic. Welsh ministers enjoy very favorable opportunities for acquiring this enviable, invaluable power. With the exception of those settled in towns and populous localities (and they are often relieved by strangers, for itinerating is not yet out of fashion), they are not required to preach so often to the same people as their English brethren. A thin and scattered population compels them to be pluralists; and as their chapels lie sufficiently distant from each other to admit of their preaching the same sermon twice on the same day, increased confidence is necessarily gained, as a discourse will be delivered the second and third time with greater freedom and boldness than the first.

The acquisition of self-command is further facilitated by frequent engagements at public meetings, of which there is no lack in Wales, and also by the practice of taking preaching tours, when the ministers almost invariably preach the same sermons. They thus become so sure of their ground by going over it so repeatedly, and so accustomed to address large miscellaneous congregations in the open air and elsewhere that they are not easily disconcerted.

Adaptation is another characteristic of Welsh preaching. The generality of the sermons preached, bear evident marks of having been composed in view of the real exigences and capacities of the people for whom they were intended. Speculative views and refined disquisitions are not allowed to pass in lieu of evangelical sentiments and Scriptural statements. Those aspects of truth with which plain people can not be expected to have much sympathy are seldom, if ever, presented before an audience. Points of established and prevalent belief are wisely left undisturbed. Matters unto which ordinary minds 'can not attain' are not brought down from their elevation. The illustrations employed are drawn from incidents, scenes, and occupations with which the parties for whose instruction they were borrowed are supposed to be intimately acquainted.

The *style* is simple and homely—for the preacher feels no pleasure and finds no interest in employing words which the people do not understand. The appearance and manner of the Welsh preacher are admirably adapted to secure for him a candid hearing. He stands before his audience more as a friend than an official. The people feel that he is of them, and with them, and that their interests are one and undivided. In general he is a plain-dressed and plain-spoken man. To the refined he may appear unceremonious and blunt, if not even deficient in courtesy: but he is never effeminate, finical, or affected. He may be rough but he is ever manly. His is not the strutting gait and mincing enunciation; and he is about the last man in the world to be concerned about the appearance of his drapery when his subject has warmed him into eloquence.

Another very prominent feature in Welsh preaching is the prevalence of the *illustrative style.* But here the preacher must battle, as best he can, with the difficulties arising from the limited range of objects from which his illustrations are to be drawn. The people that flock to hear him know nothing of the arts and sciences. Sealed to them are the languages containing the wealth of history. The pages of nature's book are opened before them, and she has issued some of her works in Wales in so large a style that 'the reader may run through them.' Rocks and mountains are characters she has frequently employed. And it is nature with her varied appearances, together with the ordinary pursuits and avocations of life, that the preacher must lay under contribution if he would expound 'the things which are not seen by the things which are seen.' Let it not, however, be supposed that they cultivate the imagination to the neglect of their other faculties, or that they allow themselves to be carried away by its witchery into the regions of improbability and fiction. With rare exceptions the imagination is employed as the handmaid of the reason and judgment, and restricted pretty closely to its own legitimate and proper province which is to *illustrate.* What logic is *exclusively* to a cold unimpassioned mathematical mind, *that* is imagination *subordinately* to the Welsh preacher. The unpoetical reasoner arrives at conclusions by means of a series of *therefores*, as stepping-stones—the Welshman establishes his points by an apt illustration.

Great *aptness* is also displayed in interpreting and turning to practical account the facts and historical parts of Scripture. The narratives and facts of the Bible are treated as the exponents of principles and the expositors of human nature. The doctrinal part of the sacred volume is illustrated by means of its recorded incidents. Circumstances, and events which had suggested no useful lessons to less reflective minds are so expounded that they become 'profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.' The people are made to see how the 'things which were written aforetime were written for their learning.'

If there was any one thing, more than another, in which the celebrated Williams, of Wern, excelled as a preacher, it was in the novelty and pertinence of his illustrations. Never, perhaps, since the days of the Great Teacher, did any preacher lay the objects of nature and the pursuits of men under greater contributions for the exposition and enforcement of religious truth. All things seemed to whisper something to him which had never been disclosed before, and to point out for his occupation new and highly advantageous points of observation. Some men appear to examine the same objects always from the same spots, and hence the sameness of their reflections; but Williams seemed to look at every thing from unfrequented points that commanded fresher and bolder views. Every object in nature—every human avocation—every incident in life seemed to have fastened on it some new and striking truth. To simplify rather than embellish a subject was his great aim, and hence the rejection of mere *flowers*, and the employment of only *expository* images. His mind was of too masculine a cast, and too solemnly *pledged* to a usefulness in all pulpit engagements, to admit of his dallying with the mere ornaments of oratory. His use of comparisons was sufficient to convince any one that he attached no value whatever to them, except so far as they subserved the explanation or application of truth. Unlike certain showy but weak-minded preachers, who are so enamored of tinsel and glare that they often employ even religious truths only as pegs on which to suspend a fine simile, he, on the contrary, with almost instinctive severity of taste, allotted to figures only a subordinate department in expounding the great verities of the Bible.

Passion is another feature in Welsh preaching. This capital quality, so necessary to effective speaking, is quite natural to a genuine Celt. An unimpassioned Welshman is a singular phenomenon; and when he is cold as well might a spark be elicted from an icicle. He will not stop short of the freezing point. The usually ignitible temperament of the Cambrian preacher is of signal service to him in addressing an audience. It gives an air of unmistakable earnestness and of reality to all he says. Words of import so momentous that an angel might well tremble as he uttered them, are not pronounced listlessly and allowed to drop like snow from his lips. It makes his 'thoughts breathe and his words burn.' It is this which produces, and renders appropriate, the bold burst, the abrupt apostrophe, the glowing description, the passionate declamation, the burning invective, the rousing appeal, and the impetuous thundering charge. It was his tremendous passion, in conjunction with a peerless imagination, that gave Christmas Evans so much power over a congregation. To see his huge frame quivering with emotion, and to watch the lightning flash of his eye—that lustrous black eye of which Robert Hall said it would do to lead an army through a wilderness—and to listen to the wild tones of his shrill voice as he mastered the difficult *prosopopœia*, was to feel completely abandoned to the riotous enthusiasm of the moment. Abstractions, dry as the bones which Ezekiel saw of old in the valley, he could clothe with sinews, flesh, and skin, and, breathing life into them, make them stand on their feet. Of scenes enacted centuries ago in the glens and on the hills of Judea, his fire and fancy enabled him to furnish so vivid a representation that all sense of the distance, both of time and place, was entirely lost; and though he was frequently guilty of the grossest anachronisms, yet so admirably sustained were the parts assigned to the different characters, and so life-like and natural were the sentiments put into their mouths, that the discrepancy, however glaring, did not damage the effect. So genuine was the fire that burned within him, and so completely did he throw the whole of his impassioned soul into his descriptions, that even the fastidious critic was 'taken captive' and compelled to become his admirer.

The *delivery* of a Welsh sermon is usually marked by great variety of intonation. The ear is entertained while the mind is informed. The charms of sound secure a hearing for sense. The attention of an audience is sustained to the close of a discourse without weariness or flagging, as the speaker's tones are constantly varying with the varying aspects of his theme. Welsh ministers need not have any fears that mellifluous and varied sounds will be thrown away upon a people devoted like their countrymen to melody and song. And so sensible are they of the value of a well-trained voice to a public speaker, that they pay particular attention to its improvement.

The Welsh preacher, in his expository approach to the selected topic of discourse, is in general cool and collected, and speaks in a quiet and somewhat low tone of voice. As he advance in his sermon and fairly gets into the "hwyl" he nearly exhausts the variations of the gamut. Now there is the shrill, startling alarm—and then the deep, sepulchral tones of solemnity. Now we have the dash of defiance—the shout of triumph—the dance of joy—and then the tremulous accents of tenderness—the earnest tones of remonstrance, and the muttering of the thundering denunciation. Now we have the plaintive melancholy of bereavement's soliloquy—the wail of sorrow, and the cry of despair—and then the wild ecstatic notes of the Christian pilgrim, as with the tear in his eye, he sings of the dawning of the morn that will set him in heaven's bowers of repose. Now we have the loud voice rending the sky and awakening the echo—and then the 'small still voice' and the whisper of confidence. In short there is all the variety both of manner and tone that disinterested love or friendship would employ in private in attempting to dissuade a person from pursuing a suicidal course, or to persuade him to follow after things in harmony with the tremendous destiny of an immortal creature.

The *appeals* of a Welsh preacher are in general of the most uncompromising character. They are not frittered away by apologetic disclaimers of 'this, that, and the other.' They come with the suddenness and disclosing glance of the lightning, and with the terribleness of thunder. Sometimes the preacher holds before his congregation a picture which he has been painting, and while they are wrapt in silent admiration of its fidelity and beauty, there comes to many a conscience the rapier thrust of 'Thou art the man.' No one knows where to look for the application, for it is not confined to the close of a discourse. There is nothing to indicate the direction from which the preacher may come, or in what way he will make his attack; and nothing in the nature of the subject chosen for discussion, or in the manner of illustrating it, that offers security against his onsets.

We close this sketch of the Welsh pulpit with the remark, that Wales has given to the American churches many of their very *best* preachers, and most active, influential minds. Saying nothing of the great apostle of religious liberty in this Western world—ROGER WILLIAMS—nor of many others now gone, it were easy to form a long list of distinguished names of American clergymen, who are, either by immigration or descent, Welshmen.

DISCOURSE EIGHTY-FIRST.

DAVID CHARLES.

This well known Calvinistic Welsh preacher was born October 11, 1762, in the parish of St. Clears, south of Wales. He was a brother of the distinguished "Charles of Bala." During his apprenticeship as a flax-dresser, he committed to memory the whole of Young's "Night Thoughts." About the year 1780 he went to Bristol, where he did much to improve his education, and deepen his religious feelings. On his return, after three years, he set himself up in business, and although his gifts for exhortation and prayer soon attracted attention, he was not induced to enter the ministry until forty years of age. The paucity of preachers rendered it necessary that he should travel, and he labored, for a time, chiefly in the English parts of Caermarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, and Glamorganshire. In 1828 a stroke of apoplexy deprived him, to a great extent, of the use of his bodily and intellectual powers. He remained speechless for six years, and died on the 2d of September, 1834. He belonged to the Methodist connection.

Rev. W. Rees in his life of "Williams of Wern," speaks of David Charles as possessed of "knowledge, and evangelical experience, of eagle-like powers of penetration, of pure and exalted taste, and of sentiments transcendentally beautiful. His sermons in print," he adds, "are like apples of gold in pictures of silver. In delivering them, the preacher was as if he opened a mine of pearls before his hearers, digging them out gradually, one by one." The eminent Ebenezer Morris, having heard him preach, declared that he had no heart to attempt to preach again. Christmas Evans says in one of his letters, "Mr. Charles was notable among divines; in reperusing his sermons, I feel holy sparks emanating from him, as from a great star, and melting the frost of my soul." We have read most of his sermons which have been translated, and select the following as a happy specimen.

CHRIST ALL, AND IN ALL.

"But Christ is all, and in all."—Colossians, iii. 11.

If it be inquired, What is Christ? the answer is, Christ is all—He is all things, and nothing less. If it be asked, Where is Christ?

He is in all. Nature, without God, is nothing, is a nonentity; and so also the moral universe, without Christ, is nothing, and worse than nothing.

Christ is "in all" nature as God; He made all things. "By Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, and for Him; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist, and He is the head of the Church." "Thou, Lord, in the begining hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of Thine hands." "Without Him was not any thing made that was made—in Him was life." If you ask creation, in any of its parts, What art thou? the answer of each is, "I am what I was made; I have nothing in me but what was made; He that made me is 'in all' that I am; God, in His work, is in me, and in all that I am." So Christ, as God, is "in all" creation. The heavens declare His "glory." We see Christ in all things, as a certain queen, while inspecting the wonders of Solomon's court, saw Solomon himself, and his wisdom, in all things. If we see aright, when we look around us, we see Christ, as God, in every object.

Christ, as Mediator, is in all of salvation—He is all, and in all. He became bound for His Church in the everlasting covenant. He made promises "before the world began"—a promise of propitiation to the Father, and of "eternal life" to His brethren. "In hope of eternal life, promised before the world began." Life to man could not be promised without an equally firm promise that man's debt should be paid. Men were given to Christ to be saved to eternal life, and His engagement on account of their offenses was accepted. They were in a lost condition, under the curse of the law, and an atonement was promised by a party that could be trusted on their behalf. "By the blood of Thy covenant I have sent forth Thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water." Christ was all in this matter—none but Him could promise, and none but Him could perform. When the fullness of time came, and on coming into the world, He says, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." "I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." He came into the world: for what? to be greatly honored in the world? No; but "to do Thy will O My God,"—to suffer dishonor, and contempt and persecution; to be spit upon, and to die a disgraceful death. Lo, I come into the land of poverty, and of suffering, it is the will of My Father that I should be found in the way of the wants of My people, and My steps will produce an effect in their favor. Lo, I am come into Thy vineyard. O justice; where is thy work? I will do it—I will finish it, so that nothing will remain to be done by My followers, but obedience and love, and gratitude to Myself. I will magnify Thee in Thy commands by obedience to them, and in Thy curses by suffering, until Thou art made eternally glorious, until the righteous Lord is satisfied, and until He will call unto Thee in reference to every believing sinner, "Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom." Christ is all in this work; His humanity was all the sacrifice, His divine nature all the altar, and His person all the priest. "By His own blood He entered into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." He gave all He was, and all that was in Him—He gave Himself—He gave all that was wanted. If justice had been asked, What dost thou want? it would have answered, I want a holy man; and more than that, I want God. Christ presents both. I want obedience—I must have it unto death. This was found in Christ. Sufferings were wanted, and He presents them; infinitude was required in all, and all things afforded in Him were infinite—the infiniteness of the demand was met by infinite recompense.

Christ is a perfect example—He is all in this also. The Lawgiver is given to the law. The law in its nature, and spirit, and fullness, was satisfied in His life; and in its penalties it was satisfied in His blood. He was perfect in all. He was perfectly lowly in suffering, and His love to God was perfect when smitten by Him. He manifested perfect love on the cross, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" O, Father, forgive them.

He was all in conquering hell; there was no one with Him in the contest. He was alone in the wilderness, when He was tempted of the devil; He alone withstood the temptation of the bread, when hunger was pressing His humanity to the earth; He withstood the temptation of the possession of the kingdoms of the earth, when He was suffering the horrors of the deepest poverty. He withstood, and in wisdom silenced, the Pharisees, and others who tempted Him. He stood against the gates of hell in the last conflict, when the "hour" of the enemy was come, and the "power of darkness." He then "spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly." "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with Me; and I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold." There was no one with Him from earth, or from heaven; His God had forsaken Him, and His disciples had left Him; He was all in this battle. His own arm brought Him victory; His own feet, nailed to the tree, trod upon the head of the serpent; His own person on the cross subdued the power of hell.

Wherever Christ was, there His presence was strongly marked by events: the earth, the sea, and the winds were made sensible of His presence. Who extracted thy sting, O death? Who spoiled thee of thy victory, O grave? Who bruised thy head, O hell? Who satisfied thee, O justice? It was that Jew, a man of Nazareth, called Jesus, that came by, and He had an arm which nothing could resist. His presence manifested the presence of God: He was the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Christ is all to the sinner to bring him to know and to enjoy God. Without Him there is nothing in the universe that can avail to bring us one step toward a state of peace and salvation. If we are ever brought to God, He must bring us. All that are saved, "them must I bring, and they shall hear My voice." They will not come without Him—He must go after them; the Shepherd must find them, and bring them back on His shoulder; no one ever returned by other means. He brings them back rejoicing. The voice of the Son of God alone quickens the spiritually dead. "You hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins."

Christ is all as the standard and pattern of holiness. He is the model according to which the Spirit works in all things. As the flocks of Jacob conceived according to what was before their eyes, so the mind's conceptions are according to Christ where He is in view. "We all, with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Before your eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you, "my little children, of whom I travail in birth until Christ be formed in you."

Christ is all our righteousness. We have redemption. Where? "In Him." "In Him, through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." Being justified freely by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. He is all our peace. "He is our peace who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity."

Christ is all for the support of the believer on his pilgrimage. If he wants his heart cleansed, the blood of Christ is all his hope; if he wants strength against his enemies, his resource is "the grace that is in Christ Jesus;" if he hope to triumph over his foes, Christ says to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee;" if he would be fruitful, he must abide in Christ as the true vine. "He that abideth in

Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing."

It is the great consolation of the godly in a world full of darkness and tempests that all things are in His hand, and that they themselves are under His care! There is not a movement among their enemies, nor a plan formed against them, which is not under His control. The care of the soul is upon Him, to whom the government of the world is committed. "Thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of Hosts is His name, and thy Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel—the God of the whole earth." He that is thine husband made all, and He governs all for Himself and thee; the keys of hell and of death are appendant to His girdle.

Do you live upon Him who is ALL? Look where you will, there is no one that has any thing in him for you without Christ. But He is "all." What is a creature for you, who is in debt like yourselves? What is the law for you, which has nothing but condemnation for the guilty? What are the mercies of God? They are but like the prison allowance to the condemned criminal, which keeps him alive till the day of execution. God is nothing to you without Christ: His justice threatens thee; His holiness burns fearfully against thee, and His majesty makes thee tremble: His mercy has nothing for thee without the Mediator. Ask all the attributes of God, Can you do any thing for the transgressor? and they answer, Nothing but damn him, if he has not to do with Christ. Go, therefore, to Him; He is all in this matter, and He is able, and sufficient, and willing. Where salvation is, Christ is all; where Christ is not, damnation is all for the transgressor.

Christ is in all. In Him all things consist. He gave being to the universe; he gave to every creature their appropriate nature, and He upholds them all by the word of His power. He rules the sun, that He may rule the day; and He maintains the order of the universe. The sparrows do not fall to the earth without His permission; He "made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder."

He is in all of Providence. There is no "evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it;" that is, the evil of punishment—the evil of sin He forever disclaims. God threatens with the highest punishments those who attribute events to chance and to accidents. There are no accidents but with men. "I will punish the men that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil." When thousands fall in battle, He counts them. "I will number you to the sword." The keys of the grave are upon His shoulder.

"He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them by their names —His understanding is infinite." "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds."

He is in all of justification. It is He that sets the sinner free. "If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed." He forgives the trespass, and the fetters speedily fall off. He has righteousness for the ungodly, but He Himself is in that righteousness; it is by his union with Christ, that the sinner becomes possessed of righteousness. It is He that enables him to believe; and it is through His righteousness he becomes possessed of all things, including the very hand to receive the gifts. It is in the justification that He orders the change of raiment. "In the Lord have we righteousness and strength." With His voice He first gave light to His people, and with the same voice He will raise up their bodies from the grave.

He is all of sanctification. To love Him is to be holy. His nature is the nature of holiness, and the sanctified soul only receives of His fullness. To be "conformed to the image of His Son," they were renewed, and in this image they shall be without fault before God. No holiness will be found upon the glorified Church but what proceeded from Christ. That which is the source of holiness on earth, will be forever the source of it in heaven. He begins a good work now, which He will carry on to perfection and forever support.

Christ is all in the means of grace; if He is not there, the means are no means of grace at all. Paul plants, and Apollos waters, and neither does more than this: God in Christ, must secure the growth. Why look we at men, expecting this or that to be done by them? They are but earthen vessels, holding a precious treasure, by means of which Christ works by the excellency of His power. Ordinances have nothing to give without Him. Is he in them? If so, they will answer the purpose. They were not intended but to show Him in them. There was no virtue in the hem of the garment but what it received from the Wearer.

Christ will be all in our triumph in death. He will give us an abundant entrance into His everlasting kingdom. He was the Shepherd, in whom David trusted, when he entered the dark valley. With the keys he carries He opens, and no one can shut. "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." In an hour we think not He will come. The Son of Man *will* come—the fever, or whatever event will accompany His approach, is of no importance, He, who is "in all" things for His people, the Son of Man being *in* it, will make it a glorious and abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom.

Christ will be all in the resurrection of the dead. "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." Some will be raised united to Him: and He "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." He will send His angels, after He has raised them with His voice, to gather His saints together. He is the Spirit that quickens the souls of His people first; and which, in the second place, will quicken their bodies. In Christ they shall be made alive.

Christ will be all in judgment. No one shall be found then usurping His throne. He alone will judge men and angels. The very Man that was seen here at the bar of Pilate, will be there "taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel." He who rode the ass colt toward Jerusalem, will be seen riding the cloud, "revealed from heaven with His mighty angels." He even now holds the devils in chains of darkness against the judgment of the appointed day; and *they* knew their Judge when men failed to know Him. "Art Thou come here to torment us *before the time*, Jesus, thou Son of God?" Their objection was not to the person of the Judge, but the *time:* they had hope of another day for the assize, but they had no notion of another occupant of the bench. When "He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe," He will be glorious in His appearance. "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him; and they also who pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." I saw "one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt round the paps with a golden girdle: his head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters; his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."

He will be the Judge in His own cause—a privilege carefully denied to fallible judges; the great question of the judgment will be, How did the subjects conduct themselves toward their King? The weight and awfulness of the trial will center on this point; and this being made manifest, will throw light on all besides. When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit on the throne of His glory; and before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them one from another—then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, thirsty and naked, and in prison, and ye ministered unto Me. And He shall say also to them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, for I was with you, and you did not minister unto Me." The behavior of the highest person concerned, is the highest point of the judgment. Many will have passed through the world without knowing that the cause and the people of Christ are present with them, and the light of the judgment-day will give them the conviction of their blindness and indifference.

Christ will be all in the punishment of angels and men. The "wrath of the Lamb" will from the entire measure of their eternal misery. He will break them to pieces with His rod of iron. "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire:" and they shall wail because of Him. They "shall say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb."

He will be all in the glory of the saints. His glory will constitute their glory: "The glory, which Thou gavest Me, I have given them. Father, I will that they be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me." Their claim to glory is of Him. He enters into His glory—His own glory, existing in the promise of the Father, made to Him when He promised the ransom for His saints; and they enter into His glory. They were raised with Him from the dead in His resurrection, and they sit with Him in heavenly places. Their meekness is of Him. He gave them a proof of His love to them, when He purified them unto Himself, making them His peculiar people. He "loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might satisfy and cleanse it—that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." He gives the right to glory, and the meetness to enjoy it. There will be no more glory in heaven besides what proceeds from Christ, and through Him, than there is light in the world without the sun. To see Him as He is—to be for ever with Him, and to be like Him, will be the whole of heaven's happiness and glory.

If Christ, then, is all, look to Christ in all. If thou art guilty, look to Him for righteousness. There is righteousness in Him for such as thou art, and there is no way of escaping damnation but through Him. To be justified without believing in the Son of God is impossible. He is a fountain of grace to His people. Come to

Him in your wretchedness—He will cleanse thee, and purify even thee to Himself; and He will give thee a new heart.

If He is all in providence, why do you quarrel with second causes? The government is upon His shoulder. The Father sees His shoulder sufficient to bear the burden He has placed upon it, and why should not we? Moses' shoulder was too weak for the government of Israel without help; but it is not so with Christ. He is Head over all things to His church—not a Head over the church merely, but over all things else, for the good of the church —over the world, and angels, and principalities; over death, and hell, and the grave. Nothing, from the throne of God to the depth of perdition, moves but by His sufferance or command. Every angel serves Him, and every devil is chained to His will; every angel willingly works for Him, and every devil unwillingly serves Him. He is the Prince of the kings of the earth. "By Him princes rule, and all the judges of the earth." The shoulder that bore the cross, bears the government of all, and He makes all things work together for good to them that love God.

If Christ is in all, then the way to encounter all, and pass through all without harm, is to go to Him. Joseph was all in Egypt once, and the first point was to gain his favor; and so it is with us; the great question is, how do matters stand between us and Christ? The answer to this, is an answer to all inferior inquiries. What is there in providence that affects us? Nothing but what He who loves you has appointed. Seek to discern Him in all things; seek faith, and He will be seen as He is in all.

Let those, whose concerns are in His hand, acknowledge His sufficiency. Acknowledge Him to be in all, by trusting Him in all. It shall be with you, not as others would have it, but as He who loves you has ordained. He loves you better than you can love yourselves; your own love will but destroy you; but in His love there is SALVATION.

Have you been shut out from all things but living to Christ? No one will come to Him but the man who has lost all. The want of all things, shows the value and importance of Him who is in all. While you have any thing else, you can live without Christ, and you will die in your rejection of Him. O, the mercy of discovering our poverty before it is too late. The spirit of fullness and sufficiency stands in the way of coming to Christ.

If you have found *all* in one place, do not again wander hither and thither. Go straight to Him who gives freely to all who will receive. Be frequently examining yourselves, as to where your *all* lies, and what you think you possess without Christ; whether any thing besides destruction awaits you. Why should your hearts be found any where besides where your treasure is, your ALL? "Abide in Me, and I in you." "He that eateth Me, he shall live by Me." To live on Christ, is to honor the plan of mercy and the wisdom of God. The act of living upon Christ is pleasing unto God. This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent. By this you honor God's eternal counsel; if you had no opportunity to do any thing besides this for God in the world, He would consider thy falling in with His plan an honor done to Him. Christ is suitable in all that He is to supply our various wants. He is the bread from heaven, and we feed upon Him: He is the fountain for sin and uncleanness: the fountain was opened to cleanse from these, and it must be used. There is no way of being fruitful but by coming to Him: "our fruit is of Him." "Without Him we can do nothing." "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Speak not of imperfections and failings while you have Christ at hand. He says, "I am with you always," and He is ALL. I can do all things through Him.

Those that live upon Christ, making Him their all, are desirous of living to Christ—to His glory. The woman of Samaria began to be something for Christ before she was aware of it. "Come, see a man—is not this the Christ?" "He that had been possessed with the devil, prayed Him that he might be with Him," but that was not allowed him at that time, but Christ commanded him at the same time to be in His service. "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." Two things there are, one of which occupies the thought of every one—self and Christ. No one cares for Christ until he has committed himself to Him, until he can say, "I know in whom I have believed." Thou canst never care for thyself to any purpose; it is too great a task for thee—self has wants thou canst never supply, it has guilt thou canst never remove, fears thou canst not dispel, filth thou canst not cleanse, enemies thou cast never conquer, desires thou canst never accomplish. Thou wilt surely fail in all these. "He that seeks his life shall lose it." To whom, then, will you give the care of the soul when you are dying? Stephen committed his soul to Christ. "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Let us see, if Christ is all to us, what we are to Him. The husband is all to his wife, and shall the wife be devoted to another man? Shall Christ be all to us, and we be all to Satan? Let us see what Christ possesses which He withholds from the believer. He possesses nothing; His blood is our ransom, His strength is to help us, His victory over death and the grave is for us, and His merits give us a claim to heaven. Have we any thing which we withhold from Him? If we have, the proof that Christ is ours is insufficient. When God asked Abraham for his son, He got him; when He required of some their possessions, He received them; and when He demanded the lives of others, they were given up to Him.

Do not go to judgment and to eternity poor, while all things suitable for you are within your reach; they are offered at your very doors—there is no excuse for the eternal poverty of the unbeliever. Every thing that suits the eternal world you are going to is at hand. Christ is all for His people here, and He is a suitable inheritance for them hereafter.

None are so faithful as the subjects of sin—they rush upon eternal death for its sake. Although devils and the damned have been in flames for thousands of years, on account of sin, yet the unbeliever in the world loves sin as much as ever. Many a subject boasts that he will lay down his life for his king; but here all do the thing without hesitation; they give their souls and their bodies to everlasting destruction for the pleasures of sin for a season.

DISCOURSE EIGHTY-SECOND.

CHRISTMAS EVANS.

This great pulpit orator was born at Ysgarwen, Cardiganshire, South Wales, on the 25th of December, 1766. His father died when he was only nine years old, and he spent his early years, subsequent to this, as a servant for the farmers in the parish. At the age of seventeen he was so ignorant as to be unable to read a word. He soon, however, became the subject of deep religious impressions, and in an incredibly short time learned to read the Scriptures. At the age of eighteen he joined the Arminian Presbyterians, and began to exercise his gifts in prayer and exhortation. He shortly after preached his first sermon, but feeling the need of more education, devoted himself for some time to study under the direction of his pastor. In the year 1788 he adopted the views of the Baptists, and was received into the fellowship of a church of that faith at Aberduer. In 1790 he was ordained a missionary to several small churches in the vicinity of Lëyn. Two years after this he visited South Wales, where his preaching was attended with the most remarkable awakening of the churches, and the conversion of multitudes to Christ. At the age of forty-six years he settled at Anglesea. A powerful revival began under his labors, and continued for several years. He remained here fourteen years and then took charge of the Baptist church in Caerphilly, Glamorganshire, where he preached two years; after which he accepted a call from the church in Cardiff, a neighboring town. During his ministry of two and a half years at this place he wrote about two hundred sermons for the press, many of which have since been published. His last charge was in Caernarvon. On the sixteenth of July, 1838, he preached at Swansea, and said, as he sat down, "This is my last sermon;" and so it proved; for that night he was taken violently ill, and died three days afterward, in his seventy-third year, and the fifty-fourth of his ministry.

Evans's descriptive powers were perhaps never excelled. His imagination was of the imperial order, and absolutely knew no bounds; and his facility in the ready use of language altogether wonderful. Besides this he was a man of the liveliest sensibilities, and always spoke out of a full heart, sometimes storming his hearers with his impassioned earnestness, and sometimes himself overwhelmed with the magnitude and grandeur of his theme. Add to this his pre-eminent faith and holiness of life, and we discover the secret of his astonishing pulpit eloquence—which, according to Robert Hall, entitles him to be ranked among the first men of his age. The best edition of Evans's sermons is that by Joseph Cross. Of course no translator can do him full justice, but the wide popularity of these discourses is the best evidence of their real merit, though in a foreign dress. Perhaps there is no one, upon the whole, superior to that which is here given. It contains one or two passages, which, for originality and brilliancy of conception, and for force of utterance, are absolutely unrivalled.

THE FALL AND RECOVERY OF MAN.

"For if, through the offense of one, many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many."—ROMANS, v. 15.

Man was created in the image of God. Knowledge and perfect holiness were impressed upon the very nature and faculties of his soul. He had constant access to his Maker, and enjoyed free communion with Him, on the ground of his spotless, moral rectitude. But alas! the glorious diadem is broken; the crown of righteousness is fallen. Man's purity is gone, and his happiness is forfeited. "There is none righteous; no, not one." "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." But the ruin is not hopeless. What was lost in Adam, is restored in Christ. His blood redeems us from bondage, and His Gospel gives us back the forfeited inheritance. "For if, through the offense of one, many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." Let us consider;—*First*, The corruption and condemnation of man; and *Secondly*, his gracious restoration to the favor of his offended God.

I. To find the cause of man's corruption and condemnation, we must go back to Eden. The eating of the "forbidden tree" was "the offense of one," in consequence of which "many are dead." This was the "sin," the act of "disobedience," which "brought death into the world, and all our woe." It was the greatest ingratitude to the Divine bounty, and the boldest rebellion against the Divine sovereignty. The royalty of God was contemned; the riches of His goodness slighted; and His most desperate enemy preferred before Him, as if He were a wiser counselor than Infinite Wisdom. Thus man joined in league with hell, against heaven; with demons of the bottomless pit, against the Almighty Maker and Benefactor; robbing God of the obedience due to His command, and the glory due to His name; worshiping the creature, instead of the Creator; and opening the door to pride, unbelief, enmity, and all wicked and abominable passions. How is the "noble vine," which was planted "wholly a right seed," "turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine!"

Who can look for pure water from such a fountain? "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." All the faculties of the soul are corrupted by sin; the understanding dark; the will perverse; the affections carnal; the conscience full of shame, remorse, confusion, and mortal fear. Man is a hard-hearted and stiff-necked sinner; loving darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil; eating sin like bread, and drinking iniquity like water; holding fast deceit, and refusing to let it go. His heart is desperately wicked; full of pride, vanity, hypocrisy, covetousness, hatred of truth, and hostility to all that is good.

This depravity is universal. Among the natural children of Adam, there is no exemption from the original taint. "The whole world lieth in wickedness." "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness is as filthy rags." The corruption may vary in the degrees of development, in different persons; but the elements are in all, and their nature is everywhere the same; the same in the blooming youth, and the withered sire; in the haughty prince, and the humble peasant; in the strongest giant, and the feeblest invalid. The enemy has "come in like a flood." The deluge of sin has swept the world. From the highest to the lowest, there is no health or moral soundness. From the crown of the head to the soles of the feet, there is nothing but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores. The laws, and their violation, and the punishments everywhere invented for the suppression of vice, prove the universality of the evil. The bloody sacrifices, and various purifications, of the pagans, show the handwriting of remorse upon their consciences; proclaim their sense of guilt, and their dread of punishment. None of them are free from the fear which hath torment, whatever their efforts to overcome it, and however great their boldness in the service of sin and Satan. "Mene! Tekel!" is written on every human heart. "Wanting! wanting!" is inscribed on heathen fanes and altars; on the laws, customs, and institutions of every nation; and on the universal consciousness of mankind.

This inward corruption manifests itself in outward actions. "The tree is known by its fruit." As the smoke and sparks of the chimney show that there is fire within; so all the "filthy conversation" of men, and all "the unfruitful works of darkness" in which they delight, evidently indicate the pollution of the source whence they proceed. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." The sinner's speech betrayeth him. "Evil speaking" proceeds from malice and envy. "Foolish talking and jesting," are evidence of impure and trifling thoughts. The mouth full of cursing and bitterness, the throat an open sepulchre, the poison of asps under the tongue, the feet swift to shed blood, destruction and misery in their paths, and the way of peace unknown to them, are the clearest and amplest demonstration that men "have gone out of the way," "have together become unprofitable." We see the bitter fruit of the same corruption in robbery, adultery, gluttony, drunkenness, extortion, intolerance, persecution, apostasy, and every evil work—in all false religions; the Jew, obstinately adhering to the carnal ceremonies of an abrogated law; the Mohammedan, honoring an impostor, and receiving a lie for a revelation from God; the Papist, worshiping images and relics, praying to departed saints, seeking absolution from sinful men, and trusting in the most absurd mummeries for salvation; the Pagan, attributing divinity to the works of his own hands, adoring idols of wood and stone, sacrificing to malignant demons, casting his children into the fire or the flood as an offering to imaginary deities, and changing the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the beast and the worm.

"For these things' sake the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience." They are under the sentence of the broken law; the malediction of Eternal Justice. "By the offense of one, judgment came upon all men unto condemnation." "He that believeth not is condemned already." "The wrath of God abideth on him." "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them." "Wo unto the wicked; it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him." "They that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, shall reap the same." "Upon the wicked the Lord shall rain fire, and snares, and a horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup." "God is angry with the wicked every day; if He turn not, He will whet His sword; He hath bent His bow, and made it ready."

Who shall describe the misery of fallen man! His days, though few, are full of evil. Trouble and sorrow press him forward to the tomb. All the world, except Noah and his family, are drowning in the deluge. A storm of fire and brimstone is fallen from heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah. The earth is opening her mouth to swallow up alive Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Wrath is coming upon "the Beloved City," even "wrath unto the uttermost." The tender and delicate mother is devouring her darling infant. The sword of men is executing the vengeance of God. The earth is emptying its inhabitants into the bottomless pit. On every hand are "confused noises, and garments rolled in blood." Fire and sword fill the land with consternation and dismay. Amid the universal devastation, wild shrieks and despairing groans fill the air. God of mercy! is Thy ear heavy, that Thou canst not hear? or Thy arm shortened, that Thou canst not save? The heavens above are brass, and the earth beneath is iron; for Jehovah is pouring His indignation upon His adversaries, and He will not pity or spare.

Verily, "the misery of man is great upon him!" Behold the wretched fallen creature! The pestilence pursues him. The leprosy cleaves to him. Consumption is wasting him. Inflammation is devouring his vitals. Burning fever has seized upon the very springs of life. The destroying angel has overtaken the sinner in his sins. The hand of God is upon him. The fires of wrath are kindling about him, drying up every well of comfort, and scorching all his hopes to ashes. Conscience is chastising him with scorpions. See how he writhes! Hear how he shrieks for help! Mark what agony and terror are in his soul, and on his brow! Death stares him in the face, and shakes at him his iron spear. He trembles, he turns pale, as a culprit at the bar, as a convict on the scaffold. He is condemned already. Conscience has pronounced the sentence. Anguish has taken hold upon him. Terrors gather in battle array about him. He looks back, and the storms of Sinai pursue him; forward, and hell is moved to meet him; above, and the heavens are on fire; beneath, and the world is burning. He listens, and the judgment trump is calling; again, and the brazen chariots of vengeance are thundering from afar; yet again, and the sentence penetrates his soul with anguish unspeakable—"Depart! ye accursed! into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!"

Thus, "by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." They are "dead in trespasses and sins;" spiritually dead, and legally dead; dead by the mortal power of sin, and dead by the condemnatory sentence of the law; and helpless as sheep to the slaughter, they are driven fiercely on by the ministers of wrath to the all-devouring grave, and the lake of fire!

But is there no mercy? Is there no means of salvation? Hark! amidst all this prelude of wrath and ruin, comes a still small voice, saying: "much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many."

II. This brings us to our second topic, man's gracious recovery to the favor of his offended God.

I know not how to represent to you this glorious work, better than by the following figure. Suppose a vast graveyard, surrounded by a lofty wall, with only one entrance, which is by a massive iron gate, and that is fast bolted. Within are thousands and millions of human beings, of all ages and classes, by one epidemic disease bending to the grave. The graves yawn to swallow them, and they must all perish. There is no balm to relieve, no physician there. Such is the condition of man as a sinner. All have sinned; and it is written, "The soul that sinneth shall die." But while the unhappy race lay in that dismal prison, Mercy came and stood at the gate, and wept over the melancholy scene, exclaiming—"O that I might enter! I would bind up their wounds; I would relieve their sorrows; I would save their souls!" An embassy of angels, commissioned from the court of heaven to some other world, paused at the sight, and heaven forgave that pause. Seeing Mercy standing there, they cried:—"Mercy! canst thou not enter? Canst thou look upon that scene and not pity? Canst thou pity, and not relieve?" Mercy replied: "I can see!" and in her tears she added, "I can pity, but I can not relieve!" "Why canst thou not enter?" inquired the heavenly host. "Oh!" said Mercy, "Justice has barred the gate against me, and I must not—can not unbar it!" At this moment, Justice appeared, as if to watch the gate. The angels asked, "Why wilt thou not suffer Mercy to enter?" He sternly replied: "The law is broken, and it must be honored! Die they or Justice must!" Then appeared a form among the angelic band like unto the Son of God. Addressing Himself to Justice, He said: "What are thy demands?" Justice replied: "My demands are rigid; I must have ignominy for their honor, sickness for their health, death for their life. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission!" "Justice," said the Son of God, "I accept thy terms! On Me be this wrong! Let Mercy enter, and stay the carnival of death!" "What pledge dost Thou give for the performance of these conditions?" "My word; My oath!" "When wilt Thou perform them?" "Four thousand years hence, on the hill of Calvary, without the walls of Jerusalem!" The bond was prepared, and signed and sealed in the presence of attendant angels. Justice was satisfied, the gate was opened, and Mercy entered, preaching salvation in the name of Jesus. The bond was committed to patriarchs and prophets. A long series of rites and ceremonies, sacrifices and oblations, was instituted to perpetuate the memory of that solemn deed. At the close of the four thousandth year, when Daniel's "seventy weeks" were accomplished, Justice and Mercy appeared on the hill of Calvary. "Where," said Justice, "is the Son of God?" "Behold Him," answered Mercy, "at the foot of the hill!" And there He came, bearing His own cross, and followed by His weeping church. Mercy retired, and stood aloof from the scene. Jesus ascended the hill, like a lamb for the sacrifice. Justice presented the dreadful bond, saying, "This is the day on which this article must be cancelled." The Redeemer took it. What did He do with it? Tear it in pieces, and scatter it to the winds? No! He nailed it to His cross, crying, "It is finished!" The Victim ascended the altar. Justice called on holy fire to come down and consume the sacrifice. Holy fire replied: "I come! I will consume the sacrifice, and then I will burn up the world!" It fell upon the Son of God, and rapidly consumed His humanity; but when it touched His Deity, it expired. Then was there darkness over the whole land, and an earthquake shook the mountain; but the heavenly host broke forth in rapturous song—"Glory to God in the highest! on earth peace! good will to man!"

Thus grace has abounded, and the free gift has come upon all, and the Gospel has gone forth proclaiming redemption to every creature. "By grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." By grace ye are loved, redeemed, and justified. By grace ye are called, converted, reconciled and sanctified. Salvation is wholly of grace. The plan, the process, the consummation are all of grace.

"Grace all the work shall crown,
Through everlasting days;
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise!"

"Where sin abounded, grace hath much more abounded." "Through the offense of one, many were dead." And as men multiplied, the offense abounded. The waters deluged the world, but could not wash away the dreadful stain. The fire fell from heaven, but could not burn out the accursed plague. The earth opened her mouth, but could not swallow up the monster sin. The law thundered forth its threat from the thick darkness on Sinai; but could not restrain, by all its terrors, the children of disobedience. Still the offense abounded, and multiplied as the sands on the sea-shore. It waxed bold, and pitched its tents on Calvary, and nailed the Lawgiver to a tree. But in that conflict sin received its mortal wound. The Victim was the Victor. He fell, but in his fall He crushed the foe. He died unto sin, but sin and death were crucified upon His cross. Where sin abounded to condemn, grace hath much more abounded to justify. Where sin abounded to corrupt, grace hath much more abounded to purify. Where sin abounded to harden, grace hath much more abounded to soften and subdue. Where sin abounded to imprison men, grace hath much more abounded to proclaim liberty to the captives. Where sin abounded to break the law and dishonor the Lawgiver, grace hath much more abounded to repair the breach and efface the stain. Where sin abounded to consume the soul as with unquenchable fire and a gnawing worm, grace hath much more abounded to extinguish the flame and heal the wound. Grace hath abounded! It hath established its throne on the merit of the Redeemer's sufferings. It hath put on the crown, and laid hold of the golden scepter, and spoiled the dominion of the prince of darkness, and the gates of the great cemetery are thrown open, and there is the beating of a new life-pulse throughout its wretched population, and Immortality is walking among the tombs!

This abounding grace is manifested in the gift of Jesus Christ, by whose mediation our reconciliation and salvation are effected. With Him, believers are dead unto sin, and alive unto God. Our sins were slain at His cross, and buried in His tomb. His resurrection hath opened our graves, and given us an assurance of immortality. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us; much more, then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him; for if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

"The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Glory to God, for the death of His Son, by which this enmity is slain, and reconciliation is effected between the rebel and the law! This was the unspeakable gift that saved us from ruin; that wrestled with the storm, and turned it away from the devoted head of the sinner. Had all the angels of God attempted to stand between these two conflicting seas, they would have been swept to the gulf of destruction. "The blood of bulls and goats, on Jewish altars slain," could not take away sin, could not pacify the conscience. But Christ, the gift of Divine Grace, "Paschal Lamb by God appointed," a "sacrifice of nobler name and richer blood than they," bore our sins and carried our sorrows, and obtained for us the boon of eternal redemption. He met the fury of the tempest, and the floods went over His head; but His offering was an offering of peace, calming the storms and the waves, magnifying the law, glorifying its Author, and rescuing its violator from wrath and ruin. Justice hath laid down His sword at the foot of the cross, and amity is restored between heaven and earth.

Hither, O ye guilty! come and cast away your weapons of rebellion! Come with your bad principles and wicked actions; your unbelief, and enmity, and pride; and throw them off at the Redeemer's feet! God is here, waiting to be gracious. He will receive you; He will cast all your sins behind His back, into the depths of the sea; and they shall be remembered against you no more forever. By Heaven's "Unspeakable gift," by Christ's invaluable atonement, by the free and infinite grace of the Father and the Son, we persuade you, we beseech you, we entreat you, "be ye reconciled to God!"

It is by the work of the Holy Spirit within us, that we obtain a personal interest in the work wrought on Calvary for us. If our sins are cancelled, they are also crucified. If we are reconciled in Christ, we fight against our God no more. This is the fruit of faith. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." May the Lord inspire in every one of us that saving principle!

But those who have been restored to the Divine favor may sometimes be cast down and dejected. They have passed through the sea, and sung praises on the shore of deliverance; but there is yet between them and Canaan "a waste howling wilderness," a long and weary pilgrimage, hostile nations, fiery serpents, scarcity of food, and the river Jordan. Fears within and fightings without, they may grow discouraged, and yield to temptation and murmur against God, and desire to return to Egypt. But fear not, thou worm Jacob! Reconciled by the death of Christ; much more, being reconciled, thou shalt be saved by His life. His death was the price of our redemption; His life insures liberty to the believer. If by His death He brought you through the Red Sea in the night, by His life He can lead you through the river Jordan in the day. If by His death He delivered you from the iron furnace in Egypt, by His life He can save you from all the perils of the wilderness. If by His death he conquered Pharaoh, the chief foe, by His life He can subdue Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, the king of Bashan. "We shall be saved by His life." "Because He liveth, we shall live also." "Be of good cheer!" The work is finished; the ransom is effected; the kingdom of heaven is opened to all believers. "Lift up your heads and rejoice," "ye prisoners of hope!" There is no debt unpaid, no devil unconquered, no enemy within your own hearts that has not received a mortal wound! "Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

DISCOURSE EIGHTY-THIRD.

JOHN ELIAS.

ELIAS was born in 1774, in the parish of Aberch, county of Caernarvon, and was awakened at the age of seventeen, under a sermon by the celebrated Rowlands. He was introduced into the ministry of the Calvinistic Methodist church in 1794, and began to itinerate and declare the tidings of salvation with great acceptance. Some years after this he became resident minister at Anglesea, where his labors were attended with the most marked results, in the moral elevation of the people. His fame as a preacher went throughout all Wales, and wherever he appeared, multitudes flocked to hear the word from his lips. His health, however, had been seriously impaired by repeated attacks of disease, and at length he departed this life on the 8th of June, 1841.

Elias's chief characteristics were a clear and masculine understanding, great tenderness of feeling, a discriminating judgment, strong reasoning faculties, and a spirit of genuine, unpretending piety. For compass and vigor of language, in his preaching, he is said to have been almost unrivaled. As a pulpit orator he has been placed along side of Evans and Whitfield; but his sermons do not discover the creative genius and force of conception seen in those of Evans. His power consisted more in his oratory and in his electric energy. The discourses of Elias, however, possess very great merit, abounding in good, solid instructions, bearing the traces of a vivid and chastened imagination, and containing passages of rich and simple eloquence.

The following sermon, translated from the Welsh, at our request, is said to be an excellent portraiture of Elias as a preacher. It was taken down in short hand at the time of its delivery before an Association or Synod of the Calvinistic or Whitfield Methodists, held at Holyhead, Anglesea, in the year 1837.

THE TWO FAMILIES.

"And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."—1 JOHN, v. 19.

There are two prominent deficiencies in the character of Christians in the present age. One is, a deficiency of knowledge that they are "of God," combined with a want of mental distress, and vehement desire, for the attainment of such knowledge. The other is, a want of compassionate and agonizing reflections upon the deplorable and pitiable state of the "world." If you should visit the Christian churches of our day, and institute a strict and impartial investigation into the nature of their experiences, you would soon discover the predominancy of these lamentable defects.

A sure knowledge that they are of God, is attainable to those individuals who are of God. Godly men may acquire, by undoubted evidences, feelings of certainty respecting their state of godliness. I do not assert, that every pious man knows that he is in possession of piety; but what I maintain and affirm is, that such knowledge is attainable by Christians, because it has been promised by God. Whatever is involved in the promises of God to His people, is certainly attainable by them. The Divine promises are like so many good bills, payable to the believer, on his application, at the office of Free Grace. Some Christians are destitute of assurance, because of their infancy in religion. Others are kept in ignorance of their acceptance with God through their own negligence, their proneness to spiritual declension, and their tendency to grieve the Holy Spirit. Now, inasmuch as an assurance of our spiritual birth of God is attainable, Christians ought not to rest short of it. It is, indeed, an awfully serious thing, that any man should make a public profession of religion for years, without knowing in the world, whither his pilgrimage will end. One of the principal pillars of the Romish church is, their belief in the impossibility of arriving at a certainty respecting our real state before God, in this world, and destined condition in the world to come. The merchandise in the pardon of sins, the doctrine of purgatory, and prayers for the dead, etc., are founded upon this glaring error. It is lamentable to think, that Protestants should bear an assimilation to Papists, even in this respect. I am really afraid that an erroneous notion prevails among Christians touching the non-importance of knowing the reality of their second birth, and that they have only to hope it has been effected. Should you solemnly appeal to some professing Christians, inferring your doubts concerning the sincerity of their piety; pointing out at the same time to them, this and the other symptom, which give rise to your fears, they would probably reply to you, and say, "How do you know?" Well, O man, dost thou know them? If thou, thyself, art destitute of knowledge in this respect, how canst thou find fault with them who entertain doubts and fears as to thy real state? O Christian professor! I am afraid that eternal misery will be your home and portion. Methinks to hear you say, How do you know? Well, dost thou know them? If thou thyself art ignorant of thine everlasting destiny, how canst thou blame me, for expressing my fears regarding it. Thousands run the risk with the all important and all-absorbing concern of their soul's salvation. One man, the other day, on his entrance into eternity, said, I have only to venture upon chance. God has never designed that His people should be in such a doubtful state of mind. He has provided strong consolation for them, and He has appointed the means whereby they may acquire a full enjoyment of them. It is mortifying to the feelings of eminent Christian men, to behold a numerous church, with only a handful of its members capable of discerning that they are "of God," while the great majority appear to be entirely insensible to the vast importance of obtaining such an assurance.

And, besides, there is a great amount of dormancy, carelessness, and inconsideration among professed Christians, with respect to the miserable state of the "whole world." Very few, indeed, comparatively speaking, feel deeply and compassionately for the deplorable condition of mankind in general. We mourn a little over the impiety, wickedness, and misery of the few; but insignificant, indeed, is our mental distress in reference to the deep depravity, delusion, idolatry, and wretchdness of the many, or the universal condition of the world.

Far, indeed, am I from adopting the opinion of some, who say, "that outward reformation is of no value whatever; nothing," they say, "short of internal piety is worth a straw. Vain are all the efforts to ameliorate the morals of mankind. All will be of no avail whatever, unless we can change their hearts." Such an idea is far from being correct. It devolves upon Christians to put forth every exertion within their power, to reform the outward conduct of men. Even external amendment of life will be productive of some degree of happiness to the man himself, and of some measure of honor to his Maker.

Nevertheless, we ought not to rest here, without solemnly reflecting upon the lost condition of the human family—mourning deeply over it—praying fervently, and employing our wealth and talents for its conversion. The outward morals of that man there, are certainly very plausible; but still, we can discover symptoms upon him of his destitution of acceptance with God. That woman, that young girl, are truly commendable in many things; and yet we can discern marks upon their character of their exposure to the wrath that is to come. How is it, there is not a deeper feeling of commiseration and sympathy on their behalf? Why, none but those who are "of God" can really know and feel for the state of the ungodly world. The words of our text may be read thus, "We know that we are of God; and we know that the whole world lieth in wickedness." The world itself is ignorant of the awfulness and misery of its condition. Hypocrites in the church are also in darkness concerning it. Those who are "of God" alone have seen and felt what the lost condition of the world is.

The inspired apostle writes the words before us in the name of his Christian brethren, as well as that of himself. "We know," etc.

In this passage mankind are divided into two different classes: some who are "of God," and "the whole world." The distinction which he makes will stand immovably; and it is of the highest consequence. Some distinctions are of very little importance. It would not be of much moment if I should say, "I am a Calvinistic Methodist or a Presbyterian; that man is a Wesleyan, while the other is an Independent or Baptist, etc." Our sectarian distinctions will, one day, be buried in eternal oblivion. There is too great a tendency, in the various sections of the Christian church just now, to condemn and censure one another. One lays great stress on his communion; another attaches vast importance to his immersion, while nearly all religious men are prejudiced in favor of the minor peculiarities of their own sect and persuasion. But the apostle and his brethren apprehended no interest so vastly important as the sentiments of the text, "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."

The text naturally divides itself into two subjects:—

I. The happy and exalted state of believers; they are "of God" —and some of them "know" it.

II. The wretched and deplorable condition of all others. "The whole world lieth in wickedness." By "the whole world" is evidently meant, all who are not "of God."

All the inhabitants of the world are comprised within the compass of the text; and the distinction made therein reaches them all.

But let us notice,

I. The happy, exalted state of the believers: "We know that we are of God." Here let us inquire, 1. What is meant by being "of God." The verse preceding the text elucidates the expression, There the godly man is denominated "He that is born of God." Thus to be "of God" means to be born of Him.

Now, my dear hearers, do you bear in mind that regeneration is as absolutely necessary in our days, as it was when our Lord was conversing with Nicodemus? Do you seriously consider that a second birth is as indispensable this year as it was some fifty years ago, when none should be admitted into church fellowship without hopeful and noted signs of their having been regenerated. Regeneration is as necessary and important now as it ever was. "Except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God," this year as well as any previous year; and he can never enter into it. To be born of God is essential to the possession of true religion. Independent of it there can be no genuine piety. Would to God that a general feeling of self-examination should pervade the vast assemblage before me, "Are we born again?" You need not inquire so much concerning the mode, the time, and the place in which the change was effected, as to the character of the effects produced. You may deceive yourselves in looking for evidences in the circumstances of the change. But you should examine yourselves, whether you have realized the benefits accruing therefrom. Search your hearts and conduct minutely and impartially, whether you can discern symptoms of a thorough change in your principles, dispositions, and motives, divinely wrought by the life-giving influences of the Spirit of God. Remember, it is a birth of God; God is the great author of it. He has implanted something of a spiritual and heavenly nature within all regenerate persons: "For his seed remaineth in him." He has communicated living water into their hearts, which shall abide in them, "a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." There is a holy principle existing in the regenerate of which all others are utterly destitute. They are influenced by a spirit to which "the whole world" besides are perfect strangers. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Again, to be "of God," imports to be on God's side—to be a member of His family—to be a soldier in His army, fighting the battles of the Lord—to be a workman in His vineyard, carrying on His work on earth, and aiming at His glory in the performance of every social, relative, and Christian duty.

Furthermore, all the excellencies of the Christian are to be entirely attributed to His being "of God." Whatever superiority pertains to a godly man, it is wholly ascribable to his God. None of the glory is due to himself. All the praise must be returned to God. "Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou, that thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it," glorying, on thy part, is altogether excluded. "We are of God," says the Apostle John: and to this accords the testimony of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." The four different blessings mentioned by the Apostle, fully constitute the essence of vital religion; they involve in their own nature, all that sinful man needs in time and eternity; and the godly man receives them "of God." Wisdom to us, who are foolish; righteousness to us, who are guilty; sanctification to us, who are polluted; and redemption to us, who have been "sold under sin." It is utterly impossible to imagine of any good, which is not embodied in these things. Of whom does the believer receive them? Of God. We must divest ourselves of all merit, and give all the glory to the God of our salvation.

There is no monster so deformed on earth, as the man who professes to be a godly man, and who still is a proud and arrogant man. Such a character somewhat resembles the image of Dagon, which was composed partly of a fish, and partly of a serpent. The man who pretends to be a godly man, ought to be the most humble and condescending man. And, indeed, the truly godly man, is really the most humble. The declaration in the text, brings him to the dust, "We are of God." Believers, enumerate all your exalted privileges; revive them, and recollect that they are all of God. "Not unto us; not unto us; but to Thy great name be the glory."

2. Some believers "know" that they are of God. These can adopt the language of the apostle, and say, "We know that we are of God." I hope you have taken special notice of what I have already said. I do not say, that all who are regenerated, know it to a certainty: but they may know, and they ought to labor diligently and perseveringly for the attainment of such knowledge. Some have acquired it, "We know that we are of God." It is attainable: (1.) By consulting watchfully the testimony of conscience, or our own spirit. "If our heart condemn us," *i. e.*, if we are arraigned at the bar of conscience, as being guilty of indulging and delighting in sin, "God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." "Beloved if our heart condemn us not," or if our conscience testifies that we are free from the love of sin, "then have we confidence toward God." "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" Our own Spirit testifies in conjunction with the Holy Spirit of God, that we are born of God. Moreover, the enemies of the Christian are so cruel, and so subtle; "the accuser of the brethren" is so cunningly malicious, that they give in their evidence against us; and through their overbearing insolence, the spirit of the feeble Christian is frequently silenced. But "the

Spirit itself," who is an irresistible witness, comes forth, testifying by undeniable evidences, and in sweet accents, that he is a child of God. His testimony prevails, and all the accusers are put to flight.

(2.) The genuine Christian may "know" that he is "of God," by carefully observing the fruits which he bears. The Christian may, by a solicitous investigation, discover principles in his heart and fruits in his life, which could not have emanated from any other source than of God. He may discern his love to God, and love to the brethren. And these fruits alone, constitute a conclusive evidence, that he is of God. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Now, mark, passing "from death unto life" is the cause; and loving the brethren is the effect produced by that cause. Brotherly love forms one of the operations of that heavenly life, which we received in our translation from death unto life. We know that an irreconcilable hatred of sin exists in our hearts. Let men and devils present it in the most plausible colors; let them invest it in the most gorgeous robe; let them place a most embellished crown on its brow; let them put in its hand a most splendid scepter, and furnish it with a most magnificent throne, and thus give it a most imposing appearance, we can not help loathing and abhorring it with perfect detestation. We know that we ardently desire to walk as the Son of God walked—to copy His example in all things. We know that we are hungering and thirsting to be pure, as Christ is pure. From fruits of this kind, the believer may know that he is "an heir of God, and joint heir with Christ."

3. The true Christian may know that he is of God, from the character of his communion with God. Believers enjoy frequent communion with God, and through its medium may know that they are "of God." The Holy Spirit, as the spirit of adoption, dwells within them, "whereby they cry, Abba, Father." They are admitted into the presence of their Father, as dear children. They are sometimes capable of saying, "our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ." And whenever they are able to utter such language, they know that they are of God.

Well, my Christian friends, how do you feel in the face of this weighty, and important truth? I should not like to discourage the feeblest believer; but I should wish to rouse the minds of all who are of God, earnestly to seek an indisputable evidence of their interest in Him, that they may redound more to His glory, and enhance their own comforts. O! that my God would enable me to utter a word, which would terrify that dormant Christian, without discouraging that feeble and trembling Christian. Let me entreat of you to survey your state, in order to find out whose you are. The Judge standeth at the door. My dear hearers, one thing I would desire of you; will you, before you "give sleep to your eyes, or slumber to your eyelids" this evening, examine yourselves, of whom am I? Sinner: it is useless for thee to hide thyself behind any bush, imagining that no eye perceives thee; thou art directly before the face of the heart-searching God. Come to the light that thy deeds may be made manifest; be determined to know of whom thou art.

Let us proceed to consider:

II. The deplorable and miserable condition of all those who are not of God, "the whole world lieth in wickedness."

Some are of opinion that the term *wickedness*, means the wicked *one;* and others, the wicked *thing*. These are the sources of all the evil that exist in the Divine government. We shall adopt both views.

1. The whole world is in the power of the wicked one. The learned Mr. Leigh, in his "*Critici Sacra*," renders the phrase, "And the whole world lieth between the jaw of the wicked one," like a lamb in the jaws of the wolf, or a prey in the mouth of the lion, borne by him to his den. What a painful and pitiful consideration. The wicked lie between the jaws of the roaring lion, carried by him to his infernal den. The Bible declares in the plainest terms, that the whole world lies in the power of Satan. When Saul of Tarsus was converted unto the faith of the Gospel, and commissioned to preach the Gospel to sinners, he was emphatically told where he should find them, "From the power of Satan unto God." Mankind by nature are represented as being in "the snare of the devil, taken captive by him at his will." Our Lord in addressing the unbelieving Jews, says, "ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." The devil is called "the god of this world;" and sinners are described as his subjects, his children. His children are more submissive and obedient to him, than the children of God are to their heavenly Father: nothing but evil exists in the unregenerate. Christ, in expounding the parable of the tares, declares that the tares were "the children of the wicked one." Evidently they were professors of religion; they had grown up among the wheat; and they had been sown "while men slept." There are children of the wicked one, even in the church of God; they enter in while the servants are asleep.

Thus men, by nature, lie in the power of Satan; they are under his guidance; they uphold and further, obediently and faithfully, the interests of his kingdom in the world. Can you be at ease, my dear hearers, while listening to this heart-rending truth? Whom do you say, is in the power of the wicked one? Is it the immoral and the profligate? Yes, and you too, though you may be decent and moral in your outward deportment, if you be unregenerate. My dear hearers, can you pass over this solemn and weighty truth without being alarmed? What I have advanced are the words of God, and His declarations are of the highest importance. You are sure to feel them as such. Fall prostrate before the throne of grace, whenever you get an opportunity, and implore the Holy Spirit of God to show you clearly whether you be of God, or in the power of Satan.

The state of the world, under the dominion, and in the possession of the wicked one, is most pitiable. "O! that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night" over the miserable condition of mankind. Satan, whither dost thou take ungodly men? Ah! he takes them to the dark and awful den of hell. Those solemn words of our Lord, struck my mind very forcibly the other day: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Having served the devil in your life, depart to him—enter his den—let your portion be in that flame which was kindled for him. Having labored diligently for him, go and suffer with him. Depart, ye cursed, to the abode of the devil. Some of you may feel at ease now, though in his power; but how will you feel in that day, when the great Judge of the universe shall address you and say, Depart, to suffer forever, with that master whom you have been serving.

We observe, in the second place, that the whole world lieth in the evil thing; in sin.

The expression, "*lieth in wickedness*," implies,

1. That unregenerate persons lie in sin as their natural element. They are like a fish in the water. The immense weight which the fish sustains, would prove fatal to us. But the fish is in his element; it is his delight to remain therein. Moreover, he is frequently boiled in the very element, wherein he was wont to play and swim. The ungodly man lies, and delights in sin as his customary element. Some lie in drunkenness and intemperance. Blessed be God! such characters are not so numerous in Wales just now, as they have been. A drunkard would be an awful sight in these days of total abstinence. I detest the appearance of a drunkard as much as if the devil should present himself before me. Some sinners lie in adult-

ery and fornication; some in injustice and dishonesty, and others in coveteousness, and an inordinate love of the world. Why, says some one, godly men are so. What! godly people coveteous; idolaters. No, no, the miser is so ungodly in the sight of God, as the drunkard—so detestable as the proud—so loathsome as the adulterer. "The whole world lieth in wickedness." They delight in levity, in thoughtlessness, in unbelief, in disobedience, in contempt of God and His ways.

2. Lying in wickedness implies to lie in filth; in the dunghill; in the lowest state of uncleanness and defilement. Wicked men are represented as "wallowing in the mire." Sinner: whatever may be the character of the sin in which you indulge, it is more detestable than the mire itself; and you are wallowing in it. O! the humiliating state to which man has been reduced by the fall.

3. Lying in wickedness imports to lie in a loathsome disease; in derangement; in prison. This is the real condition of unconverted men. They are subjected to the ravages of the worst plague; they lie under the condemnation of death. They would inevitably die through the dire effects of the former, if the latter had not existed. God have mercy upon them! they are likely to die eternally under the awful effects of both together. They are laboring under the most fatal disease, and at the same time, incarcerated in prison, condemned to die forever. Thus you see what lying in wickedness means.

I shall not multiply any more words, respecting the misery of the world; but shall conclude this discourse, in making a few remarks by way of application.

1. I would address myself to the great assembly before me. My dear hearers, what is the character of your position in this respect? Do the majority of you lie in wickedness? How can you remain so quietly and reposedly in such an awfully dangerous condition? Ah! the people are infected with a lethargic and morbid disease. They are deaf; they can not hear—blind; they can not see—dead; the tremendous thunders of the law do not affect them. Now,

2. I would address myself to those who are of God. I feel a desire to exclaim upon you: Do you really and seriously reflect upon the pitiable state of the world? None have ever been rescued from their condition, more than from hell, except you. The people of the world themselves are unconscious of their danger; they are in a state of insensibility. But you, who are of God, have painfully felt the misery and obnoxiousness of their condition. Believer: dost thou know anything about the state of the world? Methinks tc

hear some one say, O! yes, I do, I have been in that state; but have been rescued by divine grace. I remember being in the jaws of the roaring lion; he would have devoured me, had not my spiritual David come to my deliverance. I recollect well the time when I was laboring under the same fatal disease; and I would have died, through its ravages, had not the great Physician of souls taken compassion upon me.

Well, thou who art of God, let me entreat thee to remember the world that still lieth in wickedness. The man who was with Joseph in prison, and was restored to liberty before him, is truly faulty in forgetting him, in not praying with the king for his deliverance. Yea, thou hast, perhaps, left behind thee thy parents, thy wife, thy children, thy neighbors, etc.; they are actually dying in prison. O! how is it that thou dost not feel more deeply and pray more earnestly for them. Children of Zion: forget not in your prayers the ungodly world. Frequently approach the King in their behalf. Always thank Him warmly for your freedom, and implore Him fervently to have mercy upon those who are imprisoned. Cry out, Lord, save those who are perishing; save them speedily; according to the greatness of Thy power, deliver the children of death.

3. I would address myself to those who are dying in wickedness. What words to employ I am at a loss to know. O! my God, do Thou assist me. Let me divide you into two different classes.

1. Those of you who are utterly thoughtless, without any concern at all about your state before God. Perhaps you are ready to tell me, "Mind your own business; we are right enough." Hear, O sinner: there is a solemn period before thee, when thy feelings will be widely different from what they are now. Soon the opinion which thou entertainest of thyself, will undergo a thorough change. Thy trial before the tribunal of heaven is not far distant. Unless thou art delivered from thine insensibility in this, thy day of grace, I should not at all like to visit thy dying bed, lest thou be a source of terror to all around thee. Unfeeling sinner: you will be touched to the quick shortly. Thoughtless sinner: listen, there is an eternity of intense feeling before thee—thou wilt feel thy sins, and thy misery, under the infliction of the Divine wrath, unless thou art speedily delivered by the free grace of God.

2. Let me speak a few words to those of you who, I hope, are in some degree sensible of the danger and misery of your state; and ready to cry out, what must we do? We know that we are with the world: we doubt not the truthfulness of the declaration contained in your text, "The whole world lieth in wickedness:" and

we are among them. What shall we do? Our case is hopeless. No, my fellow-sinners, there is hope yet for you. What? will not the world be condemned? Yes, the world will be condemned. "That ye may not be condemned with the world," says the apostle. The world will be damned. Why, behold you have given us up to die in despair. No, no, there is hope still for you. You ask me, What is your ground for saying so? Why, is it not out of the world that the Lord redeems sinners. It is out of the world that Jesus draws sinners after Him. The world is the very quarry in which God digs up stones for the erection of His heavenly temple. This is the only forest in which he obtains materials for beams and pillars in His holy temple. O! myriads upon myriads will sweetly sing one day, "He hath redeemed us from the evil world." Whence does God save sinners? Out of the world. Whence did He take Saul of Tarsus? From the world. Where did He find those who are now glorified in heaven? In the world. Blessed be God! The Gospel proclaims a deliverance from "this present evil world." Who is it that dares to attack the roaring lion? Why, our spiritual David; He is not afraid of the strong man armed; He has rescued many a lamb out of his mouth, and brought him to His own fold. Who will undertake to open the prison door? Our blessed Jesus. Who will break asunder the chains of sin? Our dear Redeemer. This is the great design of His mediatorial work. "That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves." He descended from heaven to earth that He might say to the prisoners, Go forth—He lived in poverty and indigence—He died in agony and shame—He rose from the dead, bursting asunder the barriers of the grave—He trampled upon and bruised the head of the old serpent, even the devil, that He might say to the prisoners, Go forth. O! glorious and heavenly Jesus, say so this very moment. He has authority to say, Go forth. The debt has been paid; the throne of God is forever satisfied; death and hell have been conquered. Having completed these great and stupendous undertakings, now He needs only to speak from His throne, in order to set the prisoners at liberty. Blessed Jesus! let us hear Thy sweet and all-powerful voice. The prison doors will obey Thy voice; a word from Thee will cause the iron and brazen bars of sin to go aside. Through the power of Thy word sinners will obtain eternal redemption. Amen.

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